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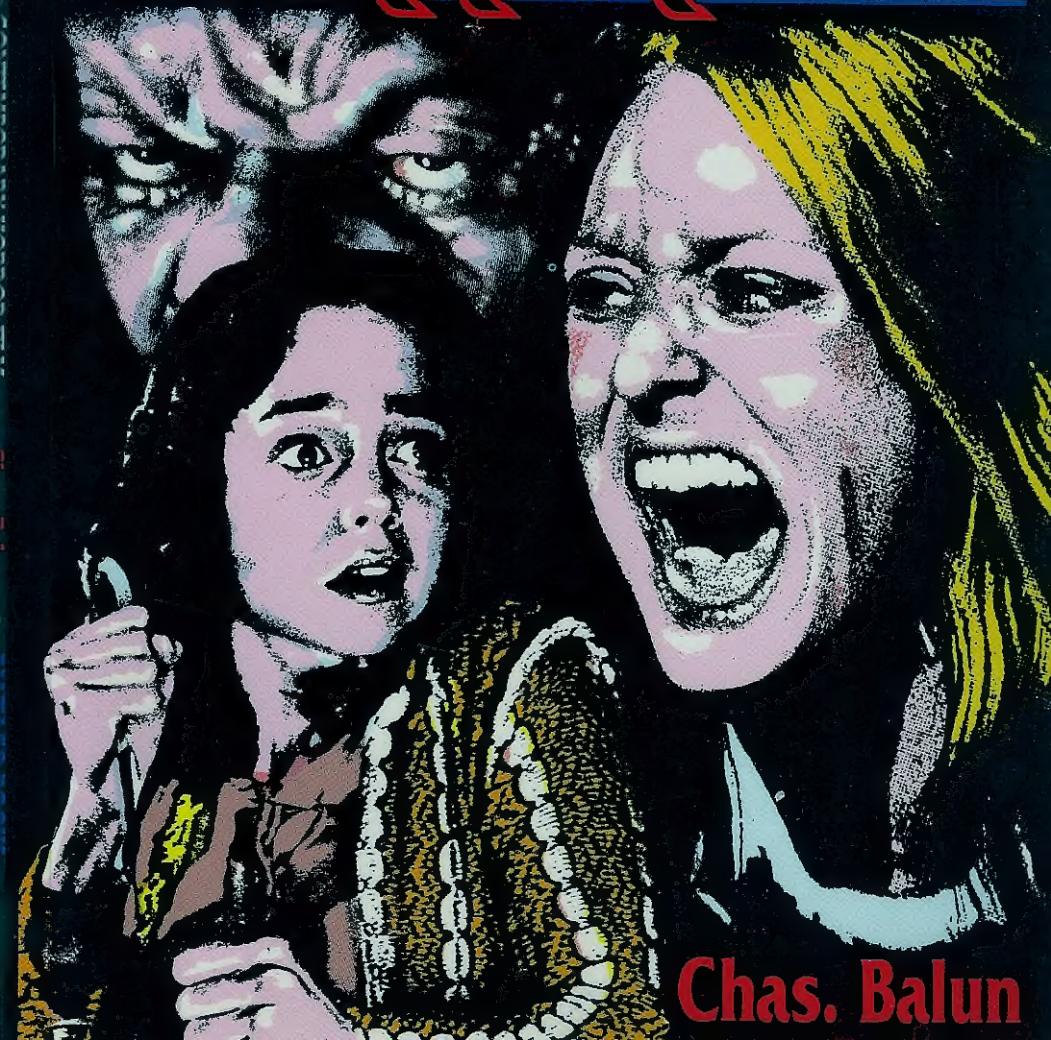
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# CONNOISSEUR'S GUIDE

to the CONTEMPORARY

# HORROR FILM

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Chas. Balun

The

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**FANTACO BOOKS**

**21 Central Avenue • Albany, New York 12210**



# The CONNOISSEUR'S GUIDE to the CONTEMPORARY HORROR FILM

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Other books by Chas. Balun

**HORROR HOLOCAUST**

**THE GORE SCORE**

**DEEP RED HORROR HANDBOOK (Editor)**

**NINTH & HELL STREET (Novel)**

**MORE GORE SCORE**

**Second Printing  
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**Book design by the author.**

Typographer GREG GOODSELL is a terrible beauty, slouching towards Bethlehem waiting to be born. In addition to writing and typesetting for *Deep Red* and other related projects, he is hard at work on his first solo project . . . . *Angels In Distress*. Look for it!

# INTRODUCTION

The very first edition of the *Connoisseur's Guide* was a slim, 32 page booklet; self-published and hand-folded, collated and stapled on my dining table. It was my first "book" and I unashamedly wallowed in the pride of fatherhood. As an enthusiastic horror fan since birth, I saw the *Connoisseur's Guide* as a chance to tell everybody I knew about the fundamental joys of monsters, aliens, zombies and chainsaw-wielding, bipedal carnivores. It worked. The book sold out its numerous print runs and hasn't been seen since.

Written on the cusp of the video revolution, the original *Guide* was packed with films that were screened almost exclusively in a *theatrical* envi-

ronment. Rare and obscure titles were really tough to find then as most distributors were hesitant to release anything but the most well-known and user-friendly genre titles. But now, as the last decade has unequivocally proven, nearly every cinematic rock was summarily overturned and all manner of creepy things were able to crawl right out and into your very own home theatre. There is an incredibly wild, eclectic assortment of stuff out there now on tape, laser disc, etc. that makes the early 80's seem like the Dark Ages. But as in most cases, mere quantity has little to do with quality. A decade ago, the odds were much, much better. One connoisseur title would usually be opposed by perhaps

three or four trifling turds, while today . . . . well, the percentages are simply *too* frightening to compute. Hell, even in our media-enlightened day, with *thousands* of choices now available, there are still those amongst us who insist that *The Silence of the Lambs* is the scariest film they've ever seen. *And lower primates might soar from my hindquarters, too.*

As praise and box office tallies mount for Francis Coppola's grotesquely over-hyped and criminally anemic \$45 million *Dracula*, there remain those unrepentant malcontents who still pine for the gory, glory days of the early 80's when cool, cheapjack shit like *Gates of Hell*, *Zombie*, *The Boogens* and *Dr. Butcher, M.D.* made ya proud to be a card-carrying horror fan. Since many of my very favorite films are of the low-budget persuasion, I feel a peculiar, nagging sense of guilt when I see horror films that cost tens of millions of hard-earned dollars - and then still don't deliver the groceries. There may be an insidious, inverse relationship at work here, as more and more dollars are spent on fewer and fewer scares. Some filmmakers just can't seem to buy a fright, either, no matter what they pay.

Many of the seminal genre works covered in this book were made for peanuts (and unsalted ones at that). Their lasting worth has been well documented and their merits are inarguable. Since the *Connoisseur's Guide* uses George A. Romero's indispensable, zombie noir classic, *Night of the Living Dead* as its departure point, it is well worth noting that Romero quietly made horror history for far fewer bucks than Coppola spent on crummy wigs and acrylic teeth.

In the twenty-five years since Romero's watershed film, both horror films and the entertainment business have undergone radical, shape-shifting metamorphoses. And not all for the better, either. What were once relatively carefree, enjoyable cinematic hi-jinks have become a multi-billion dollar racket, ceaselessly probed, analyzed, dissected and gushed-over by a plethora of glossy periodicals fueled by an unabashed fervor of a religious fetishist. When many of the titles included in the first edition of the *Connoisseur's Guide* were initially reviewed, it was without the encroaching cynicism brought about by the awareness that yes, Virginia, there really will be a *Friday the 13th IX: Jason Goes to Hell*. Likewise, it sometimes proves quite difficult to accu-

rately assess the relative merits of an original film whose life-blood has been slowly drained over the years by corporate embalmers determined to keep the corpse alive through an unending onslaught of withering sequels. For many, it is vaguely uncomfortable adjusting to an era where Freddy Krueger, Jason Voorhees and Michael Meyers have become celebrated horror icons and Hall-of-Famers to a new generation while still remaining pawns in a system of corporate greed that knows no bounds.

However, it would be unfair to burden the original *Friday the 13th*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street* or *Halloween* with the cinematic baggage of the future. Those films worked then, and they still do; you'll just have to appreciate them within their own historical context. After all, it wasn't really Sean Cunningham's fault that Jason became an unstoppable zombie-terminator-from-Hell. In

the first film, he was merely a slightly mutated, pre-adolescent momma's boy who may or may *not* have been lurking at the bottom of Crystal Lake back in 1980.

Many of the films included in this book are far from classic in nature. This is, admittedly, a highly subjective and naturally biased overview. Lots of titles made it by the skin of their teeth. Some are truly questionable perhaps, but all are at least a little above the run-of-the-mill in some way, however minuscule. It remains a relatively safe bet that you won't feel too horribly cheated by spending a few hours with any of the chosen ones. And, who knows; one of 'em might even change *your* life. It happens, bro'. I know.

*Chas. Balun  
Winter, 1992*

# LEGEND



Vampire Thriller



Supernatural/Ghost



Occult/Satanic



Alien Assault



Required Viewing



Medical Horrors



Monster Movie



Cannibal Chowdown



Psycho Killer



Massive Sanguinary Spillage



Zombie Gutbuster



Exploding Head Movie



Puppet Splatter



Anthology Film

## ALIEN ★

1979, d: Ridley Scott, 117 m.

Though borrowing heavily from Mario Bava's *Planet of the Vampires* and the less-than-classic *It! The Terror From Beyond Space*, this film manages some truly terrifying moments as well as boasting some of the finest and most thorough art direction and design seen in film today. The spacecrafts, suits, planets and rampaging monster are all marvelously conceived originals while the plot is a simplistic re-hash of countless hack sci-fi movies of the '50s and '60s.

A commercial supply and cargo space hauler unwittingly brings aboard a deadly shape-shifting alien who, through its many gooey, wrenching transformations manages to decimate almost the entire crew. The film becomes a manipulative, predictable snuff film and only the dynamic direction of Ridley Scott lifts this film into near-classic status. Flawed and derivative as *Alien*

may be, it still contains some simply breathtaking set designs. The much ballyhooed monster creation by Carlo Rambaldi is far more effective in its earlier developmental stages than later in the film when it just looks like another goofy guy-in-a-suit-with-a-tail. The rapid-fire editing and crosscutting keep us from really seeing the monster in its entirety; and when we finally get to see him about three-minutes from the end, only the blinding, unexplained strobe light in a dimly lit smoky cockpit keep the "alien" from just looking silly. The concluding exterior shot of the little midget rubber model bouncing against the spaceship reminded me more of *Godzilla's Revenge* than of something truly frightening.

Another ludicrous monster scene has to be when the little sperm-like creature, having just unceremoniously erupted from John Hurt's chest, scooters across the floor (on his tail,

yet) emitting some cartoon-like yap-ping, leaving a bewildered crew with their mouths hanging open. Incredibly lame scene which, unfortunately robs the preceding gut wrencher of much of its impact.

Well-acted throughout, exceptional set pieces, direction and effects makes *Alien* a champ in its field, though its threadbare storyline demotes it down to a first-class contender.

## ALIENS ★

1986, d: James Cameron, 138 m.

Surrounded by its sci-fi trappings - mysterious planets, exotic locales, spaceships, and hi-tech gadgets and weaponry - this sequel to Ridley Scott's grossly overrated original quite obviously yearned to be much, much more than just a big-budget monster-in-the-house potboiler. It's certainly no space epic without peer, but it is, arguably, The Greatest Monster Movie Ever Made - in this, or any other galaxy. What really counts in the relatively simplistic notion of *Aliens*' Us vs. Them scenario is that the awesome technical achievements and eye-popping FX never threaten to completely overwhelm the very human heart that beats within the maelstrom of xenomorphic mayhem.

Sigourney Weaver, more of a modestly resourceful, gun-toting pin-up in the original, returns here with a fury; expanding upon her character and pushing it to the absolute max. She becomes the film's heart and soul, and the beasts become even more fearsome because they threaten someone with whom the entire audience wholeheartedly and readily embraces. Though Weaver is obviously courting the audience's sympathies here - she's lost her real daughter and is now a surrogate Mom to a space orphan - she confounds expectations by becoming stronger,

more focused and altruistic as the danger mounts around her. She is one tough cookie; but always motivated more by love than fear. While the film is still leavened with typical male braggadocio and macho bonding, it is to Cameron's credit that he allows Weaver, her young charge (Carrie Henn's "Newt") and Michael Biehn's compassionate performance to inhabit the film's emotional core. Exceptional support is provided by Jeanette Goldstein as the kick-ass, macha Marine Pvt. Vasquez and Lance Henrikson as a benevolent android. The Oscar-winning FX by Stan Winston are unparalleled and the Queen alien is a magnificent sight to behold and savor forever.

A fuckin' killer movie all the way around.

*CBS/Fox released a 154 m., letterboxed laser disc version of the film in 1991, restoring nearly 16 minutes of footage edited out of the theatrical feature.*

## ALLIGATOR ■

1980, d: Lewis Teague, 94 m.

Highly entertaining homage to the 50's giant insects-reptiles-amphibian movies with a swiftly paced, witty script by John Sayles (*Seacaucus 7, The Howling* and *Piranha*).

The film concerns one of those pet alligators who gets flushed down the toilet by an hysterical parent but manages to survive as well as thrive on the sewer environment and return to wreak reptilian fury upon the city people.

The film is loaded with in-jokes and sly humor and never fails to be charmingly facetious in its wry outlook towards the classic monster-on-the-loose theme.

The effects are barely passable but the film is done in such a good, high spirited manner that you are quick to forgive and eager for more. A real treat.

## ALONE IN THE DARK

1982, d: Jack Sholder, 93 m.

This film sold me a ticket a week or two in advance because it was billed as a movie "from the people who brought you the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*." Well, after perusing the credits and seeing no one even remotely related with the aforementioned classic, you begin to wonder, but then hey . . . . New Line Cinema, oh, yeah, the same *distribution* company, well, that's close enough.

Written and directed by a man who has been quoted as saying most horror films are stupid, uninteresting and done by morons, one might expect this one to be fairly literate and fascinatingly realized by a talented craftsman. Well, for once, it is all that.

Not a cult classic nor a masterpiece but simply a good, tightly scripted, well-acted film, *Alone In the Dark* manages several harrowing thrills; a gang of memorable psychos and enough class and style to make up for its shortcomings. Jack Palance, Martin Landau, Donald Pleasance and man-mountain Erland Van Lidth (*Stir Crazy*) deliver solid, professional performances with nicely shaded subtleties that enhance each of their characters.

The story concerns three psychos from a mental ward escaping during an electrical blackout to terrorize, create mayhem and kill the doctor they think murdered their original psychiatrist.

The film is full of promise but doesn't really manage to sustain a suspenseful mood for very long despite some really frightening sequences. The film does manage some sly, ironic touches of humor including shots of the mental wards interspersed with interiors of a punk nightclub where the band called the "Sick Fucks" is playing a song en-

titled "Chop Up Your Mother" to an approving horde of partiers who are definitely not Young Republicans for Christ.

Director-writer and editor of *The Burning*, Jack Sholder is a talented, intelligent filmmaker; but one can't help but think that this film should have been lots funnier or lots scarier.

Still, though, a nice piece of work with plenty of good moments and enough visceral shocks for even the most demanding, jaded audiences.

## AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON ★

1981, d: John Landis, 97 m.

Supposedly one of director John Landis' "dream films" i.e., one that he wanted to, but . . . . Now, after the financial success of *Animal House*, the mini-success of *Blues Brothers*, Universal/Poly Gram handed Landis a hefty budget, lots of control, loads of special effects, and a chance in a lifetime to fully realize one's special "pet project." The results are an uneven, skittish mixture of knee-wobbling horror and tame, sophomoric humor; hardly the "dream movie" Landis wanted to make. Despite its relatively short running time, there are several moments where the movie loses its momentum completely, and usually only Rick Baker's spectacular effects keep the film from becoming really bogged down. The film updates the werewolf myth as two young American tourists are bitten while backpacking in the moors. Jack is killed yet keeps reappearing throughout the film in various stages of decomposition to warn his friend about the werewolves' curse. At first, the device is fresh and funny, but you rapidly tire of this constant and annoying intrusion.

Rick Baker's Academy-Award-winning effects range from the marvelous to the mundane. On director

Landis' insistence, the transformation scenes were filmed under ordinary lighting; hence, they suffer from a lack of urgency and drama that so effectively showcased the transformation scene in *The Howling*.

The ending is needlessly prolonged, overdone and on a similar level to Landis' less-than-classic scene of mall wrecking, relentlessly shoved at us in the *Blues Brothers*.

It's really straight out of lamestown and only a snappy interlude of the umpteenth rendition of "Blue Moon" rescues it.

The final wolf form is one of the four-legged variety and not nearly as menacing nor intimidating as Bottin's work in *The Howling*.

## BABY BLOOD

1991, d: Alain Robak, 85 m.

Prefaced by an intriguing montage of volcanic imagery and oceans aflame, this enigmatic French arthouse thriller sets down in Equatorial Africa where a sinister deal is struck between a white hunter and a native bearing a mysterious cargo. Whatever it was in that shrouded crate makes its way to a circus in Northern France and eventually ends up between the legs of a sultry and exotic Emmanuelle Escourrou. Menacing, serpentine POV shots reveal little of the impregnator, but its little progeny begins an accelerated gestation period marked by a frisky and loquacious dialogue with its surrogate Mom.

Despite the clever, artsy and well-crafted cinematic ornamentation, this compelling and provocative black comedy never shies far away from its splatter film sensibilities. The thing in Mom's tummy proves to be a real hellraiser and a sucker for the sauce to boot. The little telepathic womb commander is soon sending Mom on various search-and-destroy

missions, resulting in a robust body count and massive sanguinary spillage. There are wicked, squishy knife and pipe-wrench attacks; crunchy car accidents and one helluva messy, mutant birth scene. One victim inside an ambulance is blown into marinara paste by a compressed air cylinder as Mom makes her escape and flees to the nesting grounds. Whatever sluices out from between Escourra's luscious thighs soon sheds its kidskin and metamorphoses into a slimy, tentacled thing that boards a bus, sucks out the driver's brains and hijacks the passengers.

This strikingly weird, unpredictable and fiercely original chunkblower is unashamedly over-the-top - and proud of it. Watch for it.

## BAD TASTE

1989, d: Peter Jackson, 90 m.

Violent aliens with huge heads and even bigger butts hunt down humans for use as hamburger meat in an intergalactic fast-food chain. When a panicked call brings forth a carful of boneheads from AIDS (the unfortunate acronym for the Alien Investigation and Defense Service), mucho alien ass is kicked, shot, stabbed, pureed and buzzsawed into oblivion. The climactic shot of a chainsaw-wielding Derek (played by director Jackson, among other roles) sluicing out of an eviscerated alien's poop-chute amidst a sea of guts is nothing short of transcendent.

Originally intended as a 20-minute short and bearing both the titles *Roast of the Day* and *Gile's Big Day* at various times, the project was designed to allow Jackson ample time to experiment with his freshly-acquired 16mm Bolex camera. Over the course of four years the film gradually evolved into a full-length feature with Jackson ultimately credited as producer, writer, actor,

editor and FX designer. The results, though wildly uneven at times, showcase the talents of the gutsiest, most ferociously original and eclectic genre auteur since Sam Raimi. There are so many inspired, dizzying sight gags in *Bad Taste* you'll need a calculator to count 'em. Both the chuckles and the chunks keep right on flying into your face until the very last alien bites the 'saw.

Fuckin' A. Like *nothing* you've ever seen.



## BASKET CASE

1982, d: F. Henenlotter, 96 m.

Scary, quirky, morbidly funny, this is a delightful little treasure whose many inspired moments are sure to win lots of new fans among the splatterati set. Written and directed with much care and affection, this cult classic tells of the misfortunes of Duane and Belial, Siamese twins forcibly separated by cruel parents and the town vet in a clandestine operation performed on the kitchen table. Belial, the small, nasty one, is carried about town in a wicker basket by brother Duane as they seek out their parents and the doctors who did them wrong.

Very clever, amusing film with ample gore, great sound effects and the best little monster to hit the screens since *The Boogens*.

Be prepared, though, for some really distracting, simply awful stop-

motion animated effects. Whew! Like worse even than 8mm test footage of Gumby with the bends . . . that bad.

Anyway, it's a great horror-novelty film made with an obvious regard, one approaching reverence, even, for the genre.

## THE BEYOND

1981, d: Lucio Fulci, 90 m.

Those who would deny Fulci his true place amongst the pantheon of Pastaland maestros have no doubt failed to see this film in its original, unedited form. Released briefly in the U.S. under the title *Seven Doors of Death* and missing several signature sequences, the film was bogusly hailed by *Chainsawmeisters* Tobe Hooper and Kim Henkel (who were reportedly paid but never saw the movie) as the "most frightening . . . haunted house film we've ever seen."

Seen in its entirety (available via a letterboxed Japanese import laser



disc), the film is drenched with haunting, surreal imagery; awash in a swirling, symphonic score and propelled by a series of gruesome shock sequences designed by Italian FX pioneer Giannetto DeRossi and assisted by Germano Natali.

During a prologue set in Louisiana, circa 1927, a suspected warlock painter is crucified in a hotel that supposedly guards one of the seven gateways to Hell. Fifty years later, the new owner finds there's more than just rodent life lurking in the basement as a legion of zombies appear in fulfillment of an ancient prophecy. Not especially strong on plot nor linear logic, *The Beyond* is still a full-throttled, supernatural splatter classic peppered with audacious gore scenes bound to induce spiritual epiphany amongst any true soldier of the sanguinary sciences. Between the crucifixions, caustic substance meltdowns, eye-gougings, throat rippings and cranial evacuations, there remains a truly sublime sequence that only Fulci would dare attempt. The funky tarantula attack scene; patently fake and gratuitous to an extreme, really delivers the groceries and proves an undeniable, chunky *frisson* in a vibrant, classy and atmospheric thriller that seems doomed to chronic neglect among the horror elite.

Also released as *And You'll Live In Terror! The Beyond*.

## THE BOOGENS

1981, d: J. L. Conway, 95 m.

A nicely plotted little film concerning the inhabitants of a silver mine in Colorado, closed since 1912 because of a tragic cave-in that killed 27 miners.

*The Boogens* are giant leech-like animals with slithering tentacles and a nasty bite. Despite the usual cornball adolescent romantic interludes, the film moves briskly and has sev-



eral genuinely scary moments. Crisp editing keeps the creatures mysterious and startling enough, though a rather flaccid ending keeps the film from becoming more than just above average.

The movie is fun, quickly paced and a welcome diversion from the throng of stalk 'n' slash films released at the same time.

Still unavailable on home video.

## THE BOOGEY MAN

1980, d: Ulli Lommel, 86 m.

An ambitious thriller with an intriguing storyline concerning shards of a mirror that witnessed a gruesome homicide and continue to have some power to replay the evil to new owners. German director Lommel freely borrows from many genre films including most noticeably *Halloween* and *The Exorcist*, but somehow manages to retain a distinctive original flavor to this somewhat hackneyed approach to curses and psychic powers. Several very creative and graphic murders punctuate the plot with a needed punch when things get too listless and muddled. The ending suffers a bit from overreaching itself and bordering on being too silly rather than too sinister. Nothing exceptional here; but at times, it is curiously fascinating. Good idea, though.

## THE BROOD

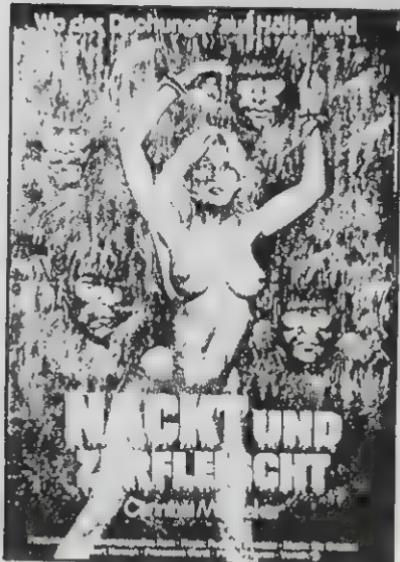
1979, d: D Cronenberg, 90 m.

A chilling, original, well-crafted and controlled psycho-suspense shocker from the director John Carpenter calls the "best in the business." The film deals with a controversial therapy program conducted at the

"Psycho-plasmic Institute," and a trail of bizarre murders which lead investigators the clinic. Oliver Reed as Doctor Heglan is properly menacing and intimidating as he encourages his patients to physically manifest their inner turmoils, frustrations and conflicts.

When Samantha Eggar ("My hair is auburn, my dress is green, the malformed fetus at my feet is crimson . . .") brings her malevolence to the surface, she gives birth to deformed mutant dwarfs who whack people's brains out with claw hammers. Sound improbable? Nah - Cronenberg has a way with pseudo-scientific jargon and clinical looking environments to pacify our disbelief and at least coax us into admitting . . . "Well, maybe it could happen . . ."

The acting is first-rate; the story mysterious, frightening and well-paced and the effects are gruesome and bloody, including an infamous birth scene where Samantha lunches on the mutant afterbirth of one of her "brood." Probably one of Cronenberg's best; a slick, exciting, imaginative film.



## CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST



1979, d: Ruggero Deodato, 95 m.

This is the Ultimate Cannibal Film - make no mistake about that. For those weaned on such jungle bogosities as Umberto Lenzi's *Cannibal Ferox* (*Make Them Die Slowly*) or *Eaten Alive by the Cannibals* (*Emerald Jungle*), this rugged, mean-spirited descent into human depravity will come as a not-altogether welcome blast of the most fetid air imaginable. Taking a cue from his mentor, Roberto Rossellini, pioneer of Europe's Neo-Realist movement, Deodato employs a quasi-documentary, in-your-face approach and serves up shovelfuls of both human and animal atrocities with a perverse and gleeful abandon, ending with a climactic slaughter that echoes the nihilistic cry of Jim Morrison and the Doors' "no one here gets out alive."

Deodato surely takes no prisoners - this film is as brutal, uncompromising and apocalyptic as they come - but he overreaches himself mightily when coming to grips with the film's haughty and hypocritical moral tone. Pretending to condemn what he so easily exploits, *Cannibal Holocaust*'s shaky and tenuous philosophical overtones serve only to subvert the cunning, merciless and unapologetic vibe of the entire film. But despite preaching what he does not practice, Deodato has made a film of such unswerving horrors and "pure moral terror" that it can never, ever, be simply and easily dismissed as a work of unfettered exploitation.

There are images in this film that will never leave you: the burning of the villages; the lethal, ritualistic punishment meted out to a tribal adulterer; the stake-up-the-ass and out-the-mouth, and the final cannibal assault will all reverberate far too long in one's consciousness. It is an extremely difficult film to shake

off; even devoid of the repellent sequences of animal slaughter, there lies a dark and brooding heart, revealing elements of a *real* and painful truth. Man is a savage and instinctual beast regardless of what kind of "jungle" he inhabits.

Besides being distinguished as one of the most violent and controversial films ever made, *Cannibal Holocaust* also sports one of the most soaringly beautiful and endearing theme songs (by noted composer Riz Ortolani) heard this side of a Disney film. Adding perhaps its own "Beauty and the Beast" counterpoint to a simply scorching and unforgettable cinematic experience.

Although *Cannibal Holocaust* has been legally unavailable in the U.S., the curious should seek out "alternative" video sources for a print and forget about the Japanese laser disc version rendered virtually unwatchable by annoying optical censoring.



## CARRIE

1976, d: Brian DePalma, 97 m.

An exceptionally well-controlled, superbly acted thriller about a waifish, insecure high-schooler with telekinetic powers and her overzealous, religious fanatic mother, energetically portrayed by Piper Laurie. Carrie (Sissy Spacek) is a shy, withdrawn teenager constantly intimidated and bullied by her classmates until the night of the prom when a particularly vicious prank backfires and Carrie unleashes her



## CARRIE

psychic powers in revenge. Although a bit overdone and needlessly flashy, the climax is quite powerful, uncompromising and very exciting.

When Carrie's mother is impaled by flying kitchen utensils like her revered statue of the martyred Saint Sebastian in their prayer room, you know DePalma is reaching out for some grandstand trickery which unfortunately seems to mar the conclusion by its unflagging excessiveness. The "shock" ending - one of those "gee, I must have dreamt it" - sequences is effectively surprising and horrifying but it is still a cheap dramatic device normally employed to distract you from a faulty storyline and a director's inability to satisfactorily wrap up a wayward plot. It becomes infuriating because DePalma uses it the same way in both *The Fury* and *Dressed to Kill* and he is just too skilled a director to have to continually resort to these unsatisfying plot devices.

Sissy Spacek's touching, sensitive performance as well as Piper Laurie's crackling, live-wire embodiment of the rabidly religious mother are both rare treats in a film full of accomplishment and power.

## CAT PEOPLE

1982, d: Paul Schrader, 118 m.

Paul Schrader's updating of the classic 1942 film by Val Lewton and Jacques Tourneur suffers from too much self-indulgent hipness and an icy, detached sense of misplaced erotica, not to mention the ponderously awful storyline.

Attempting to deal with voodoo, mysterious rituals and human and animal natures becoming intertwined, Schrader lets all these fascinating possibilities take a backseat to his voyeur's enthrallment with sexual obsessions. So instead of being a fascinating psychological horror story it instead becomes merely a rather primitive story about sexual possessiveness.

The effects by Tom Burman's studio are first rate and Natassja Kinski's transformation is especially well-handled.

Such a promising opening shot of gusting winds whipping sand across a bright, rust colored landscape, slowly exposing masses of human skeletons simply dissolves into a rather portentous, rambling, miscast vehicle for Schrader's obsessively individualistic style; a style apparently not successfully suited for horror pieces.

The cat (both the real one and Burman's mechanical stand-in) is the real star and manages the only real scares in this unfortunately limp attempt at updating and improving what was said so much better and so much more simply back in 1942.

## CONQUEROR WORM (WITCHFINDER GENERAL)

1968, d: Michael Reeves, 98 m.

The concluding words which appear on the screen in this underrated and virtually unknown minor mas-

terpiece of the macabre are Poe's, "that the play is the tragedy of 'Man,' and its hero, the 'Conqueror Worm,'" sums up the unrelenting depressing, fatalistic tone of this terrifying little film. Although *not* based on work by Edgar Allan Poe, its inspiration instead comes from a historical figure, a self-proclaimed "Witchfinder General" by the name of Matthew Hopkins, who murdered over 200 suspected witches in his religious purges in the 17th century England.

Vincent Price is superb in the title role; and free from his usual eccentricities and hamminess, he turns in an absolutely stunning performance as the vicious, deceitful and lustful witch hunter.

The film's young director, consistently criticized for the depressing and cynical tone of his films died shortly after this film was released of a suspected drug overdose at the age of 25.

The film is indeed shocking for its very realistic portrayal of sadistic torture techniques and brutal executions and its very dark view of humanity in general. Price's Witchfinder General is not merely a misguided religious fanatic but a truly despicable, malefic monster whose code of morals completely ignores rape, theft, blackmail, kidnapping, torture and murder. A grim, disheartening look at mankind's way of dealing with forces it doesn't understand and life-styles that stray from accepted patterns of existence.



## CREEPSHOW

1982, d: George Romero, 129 m.

One couldn't help but wish this would have been the horror film of the "double decade," what with the teaming of horror impresarios George Romero and writer Stephen King along with master effects artist Tom Savini. What we do get is a mildly uneven mix of horror rehash, predictable stories and a strange schizophrenic bonding of comic books, animation, gaudy, pop lighting and too many bloated, decaying corpses. But, along with these dubious distinctions, we also get a funny, very scary and enjoyable tour de force of horror clichés by the fiercely independent Romero who hits more often than he misses. Composed of five short stories, *Creepshow* pays homage to the EC comics of the past, specifically *The Vault of Horror* and *The Crypt of Terror*.

The writing is surprisingly weak considering the prodigious talents of writer King; but Romero manages to extricate every last bit of story through imaginative editing, angles and lighting. The cast is especially fine and many performers look to be really relishing their roles and a chance to ham it up and have some fun. Hal Holbrook, Fritz Weaver, Leslie Nielson and Adrienne Barbeau are all excellent and a real joy to watch. Even Stephen King's acting in "The Lonesome Death of Jody Verril" is not without its merits; surprisingly so, considering the real goofball he played as a bit part in Romero's *Knightriders*.

E. G. Marshall is superb and runs away with the acting honors for his short, very affecting performance as a bitter, hostile phobia-ridden eccentric who has a deathly fear and disgust of germs and insects.

The only trouble with these short horror vignettes is that like EC comics, you could usually pretty well

guess the ending after the first five minutes; as they all worked on a similar motif of vengeance and retribution.

Savini's work is remarkably inconsistent, from the rigid, barely articulated spectre at the beginning peering in through the boy's window, to the very nicely realized horrific beast in the "Crate," to the stiff, waxy-looking mannequin stand-in for E. G. Marshall during the cockroach crowd scene. The quantity of effects must have hampered Savini as he was called upon to use a vast array of makeup techniques. Still, some of the effects do rate among his best work and Savini even manages time to play a bit-part as a trash-collector near the end of the movie.

The film is still a delight, a very brave and eclectic attempt to marry horror, homage and hilarity into a weirdly functioning menage-a-trois.



## CUJO

1983, d: Lewis Teague, 96 m.

Marvelously frightening, gruelling adaptation of the Stephen King novel about a rabid St. Bernard loose in the New England countryside.

The exceptional special effects unit uses made-up St. Bernards, mechanical dogs, and, unbelievably so, a black Labrador mix in a dog suit! The effects are blended in an absolutely seamless manner and it really always looks like the same dog.

The scares, the vicious attacks, the almost insufferable feeling of impending doom (not to mention dog bite) makes this film one of the most

REVUE CHATEAU présente

"Quand il n'y a plus de place en enfer  
les morts reviennent sur terre..."

Une réalisation de  
GEORGE A. ROMERO



ÉDITIONS DES SEPT VILLES

UN FILM DE GEORGE A. ROMERO



truly frightening films of the early '80s.

Sure-handed, intense direction by Lewis Teague (*Alligator*), well-written, believable characters and easily the most ferocious bow-wow you've ever seen make *Cujo* the best and scariest animal amok film since *The Howling*.



## DAWN OF THE DEAD



1979, d: George Romero, 126 m.

An awesome chronicle of mass slaughter and Romero's sequel to *Night of the Living Dead*, *Dawn* manages to be alternately brilliant, meandering, funny, horrifying, gut-wrenching and frivolous at the same time. Lacking the storyline and irony of the first feature, this film makes up for it in sheer energy and spectacular effects. The black humor, spirited performances and cartoon-like action keep the film from becoming just a merciless bloodbath-slaughter film and eases it into the category of satire and parody. The

final zombie-biker slash-off is complete with rousing stunt work, a pie fight and more splattering than you've ever seen. The effects, horrific as they may be, are never really repugnant nor depressingly morbid. They seem to be executed more in a sense of fun and parody rather than aggressive viciousness.

The film is rich in small details, yet curiously wanting for a more strident storyline. Too often it becomes almost a circus and the zombies really are running wild. Fortunately, Romero's originality and directorial skills manage to effectively surmount the absence of a plot, and in place of story we have lots of action, and relentlessly exciting action shots at that. Makeup man Tom Savini is involved in many of the film's stunts in addition to co-starring as one of the biker's leaders. His effects work in this film is simply unparalleled in this genre.

A quirky, uncompromisingly personal film, Romero refused to play ball with Hollywood and didn't submit *Dawn* to the MPAA for a rating (an X to be sure). He decided to distribute his movie independently from the Hollywood system. Independent distribution without an MPAA sanction is usually the kiss of death for a small film; but Romero's Pittsburgh Splatter Express has managed to gross over 55 million dollars worldwide. One must applaud Romero's tenacious insistence on personal autonomy with filmmaking away from the Hollywood-New York mainstream and be grateful for the fact that here is an artist who demands to be reckoned with on his terms only.

A flawed, but marvelous film. Don't miss it.

Also available in a 141-minute, 16mm, non-theatrical version.

## DAY OF THE DEAD



1985, d: George Romero, 102 m.

Rarely given its proper due, even among Romero's staunchest fans, *Day of the Dead* seems as far removed from its immediate predecessor as *Dawn of the Dead* was from its precursor. But that is the good news. Indefatigably overrated and slavishly worshipped by horror fans, *Dawn* now appears somewhat cartoonish, shallow and unchallenging in the wake of the very serious themes courted in *Day*. Truly "the thinking man's zombie film," *Day of the Dead* is far more character-driven and provocative than his previous opus; showcasing Romero's skill in handling a plethora of disparate personalities who are far more intriguing and developed than the bickering, aimless mall soldiers of *Dawn*.

Though Romero had to re-think and scale down his original vision of a worldwide zombie apocalypse due to financial considerations (he was promised big bucks in return for an "R" rated feature), he still manages to use the smaller canvas to his ultimate advantage. In an underground silo, soldiers, scientists and civilians face the grimmest of odds - outnumbered by deadheads nearly a half-million to one. Into the bleakest of scenarios come a number of sharply-drawn, incendiary characters, all at the end of their emotional tether. Captain Rhodes (Joe Pilato in a stinging performance) is a profane, neo-fascist with a hair-trigger temper attempting to maintain order while Dr. Logan (Richard Liberty) tries a dissect-and-domesticate program on the zombies with a series of ever-escalating, gruesome experiments. Sarah (Lori Cardille) is trying to maintain her own equilibrium despite the macho haranguing from Rhodes and a whimpering boyfriend

who's quite literally, falling to pieces. Joining the fray is one of Romero's most original and daring creations: the zombie "Bub" (splendidly essayed by Howard Sherman) - an amicable, tool-using Beethoven fancier and the supposed "missing link" between the living and the dead.

*Day of the Dead* is far more cerebral and penetrating than either *Night* or *Dawn*, but that doesn't translate to a reduction in the film's gore quotient. Not by any means. The Sauce-O-Meter hits overload with a meaty barrage of anatomically-correct, fleshen debasements that display some of Tom Savini's best work to date.

A Grand Guignol gourmet feast that sticks to the ribs and the brain long after Rhodes becomes a gut salad in a penultimate scene guaranteed to make you . . . . "choke on it."

## DEAD AND BURIED



1981, d: Gary A Sherman, 92 m.

Great *Twilight Zone* type of horror movie building to a nifty revelation in the last few seconds. Written by Dan O'Bannon (*Alien*, *Dark Star*), it concerns some unusual experiments conducted by a town's mortician (Jack Albertson, in a spry, enthusiastic performance) on the recently deceased.

The effects by Stan Winston are horrific and bizarre, including an acid-up-the-nose face job that is not to be believed.

Overly atmospheric to the point of appearing to be almost surreal at times., it nonetheless benefits from high caliber acting, a well-scripted story, and slam-bang special effects. Although the plot is not of the most original material nor is the "surprise" ending really surprising, *Dead and Buried* is very chilling to the bone, hard-core horror that leads the audi-

ence to a delicious, little secret revealed by an appropriately smug, condescending Albertson when he informs our hero "Oh . . . by the way, Dan, one *more* thing you should know . . . ."

Look for Robert Englund in one of his many pre-Freddy genre roles.

## DEATHDREAM

1972, d: Bob Clarke, 90 m.

Hauntingly effective retelling of the classic short story "The Monkey's Paw," *Deathdream* follows a young soldier's return to his hometown *after* being killed in combat. His mother's fervent prayers have brought him back from the netherworld, but even the most strident faith fails the flesh when the Conqueror Worm comes a callin'. To avoid complete putrefaction, the young lad must kill and then suck the sauce; leading inevitably to complete and utter nuclear family meltdown. His father (veteran character actor John Marley in a fine, heart-rending performance) commits suicide as his wife accompanies their son to the cemetery where the boy has already dug himself a grave. The police arrive, begin shooting, and one family's apocalypse is complete.

Nothing flashy here, but the ever-spirally descent into madness, disintegration and death hits home with quiet, yet devastating vengeance. Produced by the team behind *Deranged* and *Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things*. Writer Alan Ormsby was also responsible for the well-crafted special effects; working with first-timer and future FX demi-god Tom Savini.

Aka *The Night Walk*, *The Night Andy Came Home*, and *Dead of Night*.

## DEEP RED

1975, d: Dario Argento, 104 m.

When was the last time you were **REALLY SCARED!!!?**

## PSYCHO

The EXORCIST

JAWS

Now there's

## DEEP RED



A Dario Argento Film

## DEEP RED

You will **NEVER** forget it!!!

Long regarded as one of Argento's true masterworks (and rightfully so), *Deep Red* marks a transitional phase for the Italian maestro. Abandoning the conventional plot devices and linear structure of previous thrillers as *The Cat O'Nine Tails* and *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, Argento allows *Deep Red* to explode across the screen in a dazzling, majestic and furious display of directorial bravado. His camera swoops, prowls and pirouettes through a sublime tapestry of telepathy, murder and preternatural mystery; fuel-injected by an eerie and commanding score by the Goblins, assisted by Giorgio Gaslini.

When a noted psychic is brutally murdered by an axe-wielding psychopath, her neighbor (David Hemmings, echoing his role in Antonioni's *Blow-Up*) begins his own investigation with the help of a curious journalist (Dario Nicolodi). Several particularly vicious and nerve-shredding murders follow, in-

cluding one in which a man's teeth are continually bashed against a stone mantelpiece. Until Laurence Olivier asked Dustin Hoffman just how safe it really was in *Marathon Man* (1976), this disturbing molar bashing assault easily stood as The Dental Nightmare of the Decade. *Deep Red* builds to a furious, cataclysmic finale, climaxing in a superbly staged and ingeniously orchestrated elevator decapitation only slightly compromised by a patently phony prosthetic effect engineered by Carlo Rambaldi and Germano Natali.

An unforgettable film experience. *Deep Red* appears in three distinct versions: the edited U.S. print, subtitled *The Hatchet Murders*; a 104 m. letterboxed Japanese laser disc, and the complete Italian version, *Profondo Rosso*, featuring a brief musical prologue and additional dialog between Hemmings and Nicolodi.



## DEMONS

1986, d: Lamberto Bava 85 m.  
Dismissed by one perilously lame wag as "an overrated . . . . excruciatingly boring and hollow exercise in style . . ." (dude probably beats his meat to pristine 16mm prints of *Doctor X*) this frisky, gore-drenched, rock 'n' roll zombie assault-pic remains one of Bava's most satisfying and enervated works. Aided immeasurably by the writing and production skills of Maestro Argento, *Demons* kicks major ass and

doesn't let up until the final coda slyly played out beneath the credit crawl.

Patrons are invited to a mysterious movie premiere by a mute, masked man (director Michele Soavi) and become infected with a zombie virus that causes the mayhem inside the theatre to match the ever-escalating action appearing on the screen. It's essential a one-joke gimmick, but hot-wired into a frenzied and frothing slaughterthon lubricated by the wild wetness of Sergio Stivalletti's FX and propelled into nihilistic oblivion by a pounding rock score featuring Motley Crue, Billy Idol, and Claudio Simonetti.

*Demons* succeeds on its very own, admittedly simplistic and formulaic terms - but, then I've never heard the Ramones apologize for only playing three chords, either.

Fuck the prissy, pseudo-scholars - this motherfucker rocks!

## DERANGED



1974, Ormsby and Gillen, 82 m.

Among the small handful of films directly inspired by the real-life antics of Wisconsin ghoul Edward Gein (I needn't insult your intelligence listing the other two contenders); this modest, yet frightfully compelling tale comes closest to what actually happened. Close, mind you, but still light years away from the flinching facts: shoeboxes full of spray-painted vaginas; nipple belts; hearts in saucepans, and moonlit pirouettes enlivened with flayed skins and vulvas-on-strings.

Narrated stiffly by Canadian actor Les Carlson (who later undergoes meltdown in Cronenberg's *Videodrome*), *Deranged* starts slowly but finds its mark as soon as Roberts Blossom is allowed sufficient screen time to suck you into his own personal black hole of guilt,

dementia and perversion. Blossoms' portrayal of "Ezra Cobb," the "Butcher of Woodside," is, most certainly, one of the most focused, believably nuanced performances of any screen psycho in recent history. You just know the poor fucker got off to a rocky start when his mother's dying words included a pecker-withering caveat to stay away from "the filthy black-souled sluts with pus-filled sores and gonorrhea, syphilis . . . and death. They'll steal your soul." Ouch.

Special effects, including the mummified corpses seen in an especially harrowing, *Texas Chainsaw*-styled dinner table sequence were built by a young Tom Savini with the assistance of sculptor Jerome Bergson.

For the definitive Gein story, consult Judge Robert H. Gollmar's report on the actual trial in *Edward Gein: America's Most Bizarre Murderer*. Gein died in prison in 1984.

The production team of Alan Ormsby and Bob Clark (pseudonymous in *Deranged*) further distinguished themselves with *Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things* (1972), *Deathdream* (1972), and *Black Christmas* (1974). Both Ormsby and Clark apparently sobered up in the 80's and claimed responsibility for such mainstream fare as *My Bodyguard*, *Murder By Decree*, *Porky's* and *A Christmas Story*. They briefly worked together again on the troubled Canadian production of *Popcorn* in 1990.

*Deranged* remains a relatively obscure video find, neglected by both major and minor distributors for nearly two decades.

## THE DEVILS

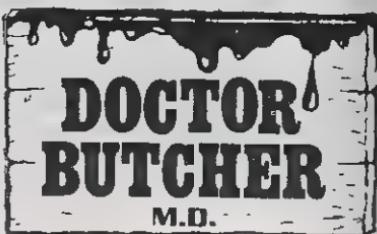
1971, d: Ken Russel, 109 m.

A vicious, frighteningly surreal look at 17th century witch hunting and politics with bravura perfor-

mances by Vanessa Redgrave as a possessed, hunchbacked nun and Oliver Reed as Father Grandier, a worldly priest with political and sexual ambitions. Based on Aldous Huxley's exhaustively researched book, *The Devils of Loudun*, about the witchcraft trial and subsequent execution of a rebel priest, the film is historical and hallucinogenic at the same time. Director Russel bombard us (there's no other term for it) with some of the most frightening, unsettling and blasphemous images ever seen on the screen. The sexual obsessions of the nuns are something to behold, indeed, including an almost unspeakable scene with a crucified Jesus and a ravenous, sexually aroused Redgrave. Russel takes plenty of liberties with the historical facts, presenting us with a haunting kaleidoscopic mixture of religious fanaticism, political chicanery, cruelty, egomania and sexual obsessiveness.

Not a horror film in the truest sense, but a truly horrifying, brutal experience. The exhausting and grotesque climax to the film when Father Grandier is tortured and burned alive is truly painful to watch. The viciousness and ferocity of the violence and madness in this movie as well as the disturbing, blasphemous desecration scenes earned *The Devils* an "X" rating in its original release version.

Recommended, but you've never seen anything like this. A flawed masterpiece, so unashamedly bold, iconoclastic and deranged that it forcibly holds your attention in a spellbinding, voyeuristic kind of way.



## DR. BUTCHER, M.D.

1982, d: Frank Martin, 86 m.

A shameless, plotless, exploitation gorefest, apparently using some of the old jungle sets and actors from another Italian schlock-o *Zombie*. The film is miserably dubbed; some of the sets are downright laughable as is the slipshod acting and rambling "plot." Alas, it is not without its merits though, few as they may be. Luckily, the film fails to take itself too seriously and that may be its saving grace. When the opening shot is a camera pan through an eerily lit, fog-shrouded graveyard, pausing lovingly to rest upon a tombstone engraved with "Snuff Maximus," you get the idea that this ain't *Inherit the Wind*.

The violence is gleeful, excessive and extraordinarily explicit; this film clumsily combines cannibalism, zombies, ersatz medical experimentation, grave robbing, ritual disembowelment, and more intestinal munching than even a George Romero film. The film concerns a mad (what else?) doctor's experiments in a presumably South American jungle, where our good Dr. Butcher, M.D. is hoping to assemble lots of body parts and attempt to reanimate the dead, ably assisted by a tribe of cannibals who eat his mistakes. It's rather refreshing to see nice, normal Amazonian cannibals wielding the machetes and butcher knives instead of your run-of-the-mill psycho cases.

The film is bold and audacious enough, seemingly unafraid to juxtapose startling horror with hilarious acting and plot, but the effects are the main show; still, beware the heart munching, the eyeball poppings, throat slittings and disembowelments. They are rude and gagging in *extremis*.

## DRESSED TO KILL

1980, d: Brian DePalma, 105 m.

Another of DePalma's richly textured tributes to Hitchcock; this frenzied, but classy film is about as exciting and mesmerizing as psycho-thrillers get. Unfortunately, another of DePalma's classic cop-out, fake dream sequences at the climax pulls the rug out from under you just when you were about to become a true believer. It worked fine in *Carrie*, but it seems contrived and uncommitted in this film. A supposed transvestite psycho-killer is stalking Angie Dickinson, playing a sexually repressed, frustrated housewife. Nancy Allen (then, Mrs. DePalma) is a frightened, though savvy call girl who witnessed the murder.

Dickinson's son and the hooker start amateur sleuthing to try and trap the killer; perhaps they are effective beyond their dreams.

The elevator murder sequence is as deliciously complex as Hitchcock's shower scene in *Psycho*; but no shots in the movie are better executed and realized than the masterfully fluid, slinking tracking shots following Angie Dickinson through the art museum.

Highly charged with erotica and a sinister sexual air, *Dressed to Kill* is a sleek, sophisticated shocker, well controlled and manipulated by one of our more clever, gifted directors.

## DRILLER KILLER

1982, d: Abel Ferrara, 89 m.

A marvelous little bit of mayhem, played as a very hip, new wave horror film. The film is very moody, very dark, with a claustrophobic, suffocating feel to it. An extremely knowledgeable group assembled this little-heralded, minor masterpiece, attaining a thoroughness, style and



pace that one rarely witnesses in today's genre offerings. A literate, cynical script that always keeps the film in bounds without its drifting into ridiculous excesses or inept parody. Nicely lit sets, fluid and imaginative camera work, and a steadfast, lead performance by director Ferrara makes *Driller Killer* far more than just another forgettable exploitation hack-job.

The Driller Killer is an accomplished, but habitually broke artist whose loft happens to be on the other side of a studio where a punk rock group practices incessantly at an excruciating volume. The painter needed just the tiniest bit if a push to go over the edge anyway and the obnoxious band provides that and more. So does his flunky art agent, his girlfriend, the building supervisor and several winos and low-lifes, who all contribute to some nasty drilling action in revenge. The effects are convincing and bloody, but imaginatively executed. Several of the artist's diatribes against the unfortunates who happen to cross him are funny, scary, articulate, and are all delivered in a schizoid flurry by the hostile painter.

You can't help but howl sometimes at the characters, the camera shots, the action, or the dialogue, but it is not a derisive laugh but a knowledgeable chuckle. Complete with a nifty, understated ending, the film offers a rare chance to see exploitative film making done with a style and refinement not seen since the early "B" film days of Carpenter, Romero, Dante, or Landis.

## EATEN ALIVE

1976, d: Tobe Hooper, 96 m.

A much-maligned second offering from *Texas Chainsaw* director Tobe Hooper. Allegedly "butchered" by studio editors, the film still retains a distinctive Hooper feel to it and is mildly effective as a horror film.

Neville Brand plays the eccentric owner of a rundown hotel who keeps an alligator in a little murky pond to feed unwanted guests to. Brand grandly overplays the role but injects enough subtle humor and bizarre mannerisms to make it rather memorable. The look of the film reflects the major studio financing as does the name cast - an unusual grouping of minor Hollywood character actors Mel Ferrer, Carolyn Jones, Brand and Stuart Whitman.

The hotel is a set with bizarre, comic book-lighting and the tiny pond contains a mechanical alligator that severely tests one's sense of natural realism. Marilyn Burns returns to the screen as the undisputed queen of the scream; and her performance is just as frenetic and agitated as *Texas Chainsaw*. The film is loosely structured, lacking the momentum to really build to an exciting finish and contains some really grating country western music constantly being played in the background through all manner of tinny radio speakers.

The film opens with some very uncharacteristic graphic violence as the mad innkeeper unsentimentally dispatches his first victim, a young, wayward prostitute looking for a place to spend the night. The plot is quite predictable, though, and the few real scares do little to help revive the lackluster writing, though Hooper does his best and does manage to show quite a visual flair in many scenes. The bizarre and cacophonous soundtrack does sustain an air of electrical madness throughout the film and the times that it's not downright annoying, it is very effective.

Nominated for Best Picture by the Academy of Science Fiction and Horror in 1976, the film never lives up to its potential; and it is a disappointment for those expecting the same edgy madness that made Hooper's first features such a classic.

Again, check out Robert Englund, B.F. (before Freddy) as the cowpoke stud.



## THE EVIL DEAD ★ +

1982, d: Sam Raimi, 90 m.

When I saw the West Coast premiere of this much heralded, grossly overrated film at the 1983 Los Angeles Filmex, I knew something was wrong right away with this "ferociously original, ultimate experience in gruelling terror." Besides the exhilaratingly, yet repetitive tracking shots during the opening minutes it

looks like just another mindless teen snuff film, complete with wretched acting, crummy photography and obviously homemade special effects makeup.

But . . . (long pause) it still manages to overcome these near fatal flaws by simply running over you like a charging 275 lb. zombie full-back shot full of amphetamines. The effects are so numerous, so explicit and violent that for the last hour, it's a feverish, apocalyptic destruction derby, with nary a moment to catch one's breath.

A bunch of suburban airheads spending their vacation at an isolated cabin find an occult book bound in human flesh, and filled with chants that can raise the dead. Great story possibilities fall apart though, through inept acting and clumsy, really feeble writing.

Don't get me entirely wrong, it's still a pretty good little film, though I did find myself muttering once or twice . . . "Boy, is this some stupid shit."

See it anyway . . . of course.

## EVIL DEAD 2: DEAD BY DAWN ★ +

1987, d: Sam Raimi, 84 m.

This is strictly Dead-Lite - all humor, little horror. Perhaps wunderkind director Sam Raimi realized he had already made "the ultimate experience in gruelling terror" (or so say the credits at the end of the original, as if you're not absolutely convinced) and opted instead for some sort of "E" ticket on a demented Dead Disney ride into cartoon hell.

In horror filmmaking, an oft-quoted dictum states that "if you don't give the audience something to laugh at . . . they'll find something." Raimi sets this advice on its ear and forces you, instead, to really dig deep for

any of the horror. Obviously, *Evil Dead 2* was never intended to frighten anyone - and the biggest joke of all was on the audience who came *expecting* a horror film.

Not really a sequel at all, but rather a studied, confident and comfortably-budgeted remake, the film forces Raimi to employ nearly every cinematic trick in the book to disguise the fact that it's still the same old Gang-O'-Chumps-in-a-Haunted-Cabin scenario that had already been beaten to death in the original (not that the concept was anything breathtakingly nouveau to begin with). Nearly every frame of *Evil Dead 2* is bursting with a seemingly endless barrage of gimmicky camera acrobatics; make-up and mechanical effects; miniatures; matte paintings; stop-motion puppets and in-your-face and out-your-ass zooms and POVs that the overall effect becomes numbing rather than exhilarating. Like a pizza "with the works" that soon grows soggy on the plate, it's a simple case of "getting more than you bargained for is sometimes just as unpleasant as getting less."

To Raimi's credit though, Bruce Campbell is allowed to come into full comic-flowering in his reprise of the "Ash" character - easily the most abused and embattled genre hero of the millennium - and his earnest, inventive and ingratiating performance anchors the film and keeps it from slipping into warp-speed wreckage.

The third installment, the elliptically titled *Army of Darkness*, is a major studio effort that marketing mavens have threatened to release as a "PG-13" rated feature sometime in '93.

Now that's scary.

## THE EXORCIST

1973, d: W. Friedkin, 121 m.

An often-told tale of demonic pos-

session of a young innocent yet rarely told so powerfully and convincingly as the amazingly frightening film based on William Peter Blatty's best seller. Even two decades after its initial release, it remains a viciously shocking, uncompromisingly brutal look at a subject so ineffectively explored by dozens of light-weight predecessors.

Friedkin is a filmmaker of fierce originality, one whose films all bear his unmistakable mark. The power of *The Exorcist* lies in Friedkin's ability not only to shock, horrify, and disgust us, but his gift to make the most outrageous seem very, very plausible.

Despite the more spectacularly bizarre elements of the story, it is also a small, human story about the power of faith and one man's coming to terms with his own conscience.

Dick Smith's effects are simply fantastic; and the 360-degree rotation of Regan's head is still one of the most shocking and unsettling effects in modern horror history.

An expertly crafted, staggering achievement in contemporary horror.

## FADE TO BLACK

1980, d: V. Zimmerman, 110 m.

Fun film about a nervous, self-efacing movie buff who gets even with his tormentors by donning costumes of his favorite celluloid heroes and acting out his violent, revengeful lusts on them. Dennis Christopher is the fanatic who does menial filing work on a movie lot in addition to watching films every waking hour, sometimes imagining himself to be Cagney in *White Heat*. Christopher is not dynamic enough, curiously tuberculin and wasted looking; he lacks the power and energy sorely needed for the part. However, his performance is still richly textured and thorough considering he almost

always comes across as a really pathetic wimp who almost deserves to be bullied.

The homage to filmmaking in general is so thorough and inspired, it's like a mini-class in American movie appreciation. You want to know more about the stars, the roles and the films mentioned in this little thriller. Linda Kerridge as a Monroe look-a-like is both startling and engaging as a girl Christopher has fantasies about.

Though the film is dark, moody and cynically depressing at times, several scenes capture all the magic that is movies. Christopher's scene as an avenging Hopalong Cassidy as well as his splashy demise atop Grauman's Chinese Theatre, sputtering his dying words, "Top of the world, Ma," are quite simply, marvelously rendered bits of inspired filmmaking.

## THE FOG



1980, d: J. Carpenter, 91 m.

Simplistic, highly stylized ghost story concerning the revenge of some pirates exacted against the greedy little seaside town that betrayed them a century earlier. What follows is pretty predictable and rather timorous, although done with such a degree of style and flair that we are momentarily distracted as to the aridity of the plot line. Carpenter has stated he wanted a subtle, understated ambience of horror throughout the film and perhaps the scenes that could have been great are merely malingeringly competent. So restrained and timid was the final cut that Carpenter went back and re-edited the film, inserting some brutality and explicitness in hope of luring the hard-core fans.

Well-acted throughout with exquisite attention paid to detail and mood, *The Fog* still never manages to rise above the staid, moldy story it has been saddled with.

Worthy of note is the pairing of the modern scream queen, Jamie Lee Curtis, with her co-starring mother, Janet Leigh (*Psycho*) as well as solidly delivered support performances by Hal Holbrook and John Houseman. Ace makeup man Rob Bottin plays the avenging captain who manages to deliver his own brand of revenge personally to Holbrook at the film's climax, which incidentally, is the scene which pulls this mousey ghost story out of the well of the mediocre nice-tries.

## FRIDAY THE 13TH



1980, d: S. Cunningham, 95 m.

Probably one of the best and more imaginative slasher films. One must put this film in a proper perspective as it was one of the first of the new-wave horror films and so should be judged on its own merits apart from the flock of imitators which hurriedly followed.

Camp Crystal Lake has been closed for several seasons due to the unexplained and mysterious deaths of several summer camp counselors. Now, the camp is reopening with the new crew mostly unaware of the past history of "Camp Blood."

The acting is casual and loose, but quite competent; and the characters all work well together with several minor characters being real scene stealers.

The film owes much to the grisly effects of Tom Savini; his work in the film set standards that few could duplicate.

The murders are well staged and excitingly executed - from the classic hunting arrow sequence to the startling axe-in-the face scene in the restroom.

Sean Cunningham's direction is fairly inspired for this type of film with nice storm sequences and an effective ambience of confusion and terror maintained throughout the movie.



However, the ending is what assures this little thriller of its lasting classic status. The first time I saw the film the audience was so effectively suckered that it came out of nowhere, the crowd screamed in unison and then followed with a smattering of appreciative applause. Brilliantly set-up and executed, this climax is guaranteed to make you jump.

Hats off to Cunningham and crew for one of the real classics of the slasher sub-genre.

## FRIDAY THE 13TH III (IN 3-D)

1982, d: Steve Miner, 91 m.

Obviously, director Steve Miner, who has worked on all the previous films in this laughable trilogy, needed a new gimmick to draw the crowds back for more of the same. The 3-D process is quite excellent and is used very advantageously and often enough to help override the languorous, juvenile scripting and obviously set-up murders. Jason, the

moldy kid from the lake, is at it again and the body count gets ridiculous. Really, without the added attraction of 3-D, this film would fall pitifully near the lower-middle ground of this tiresome slasher formula. Luckily, though, a few scenes redeem the mess and after a rather slow start, they accelerate past the half way mark and an exciting, albeit, cliche-ridden climax is in the offing.

Clever parody scene when a girl is reading the *Fangoria* magazine article about Tom Savini's gore effects in *Friday the 13th* #1 - the arrows, the axes, the butcher knives when, all of a sudden . . . now, now, you didn't even act surprised, you cynical bastard.

Coldly manipulative, scornfully written, this film is only for the most forgiving genre fans.

*3-D theatrical version only.*

## THE FUNHOUSE

1981, d: T. Hooper, 96 m.

A very satisfying, mature work from the director of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. The film doesn't contain

Pay to get in. Pray to get out.



the relentless, nightmarish scenario of his first effort, but instead opts for a leisurely paced, traditional teenager vs. monster movie using a troubled circus as a backdrop, and a well-designed albino mutant created by Rick Baker and Craig Reardon. The rather simplistic storyline concerns four teenagers who decide to spend the night in a rundown funhouse and eventually witness a murder among other unforgettable sights during their "night on the town."

The figurines and props created for the film used in the marvelous title sequence and throughout the film are beautifully crafted, exquisite bits of sculpting.

Although lacking some of the visceral shocks liberally sprinkled throughout *Texas Chainsaw*, *Funhouse* nonetheless succeeds on its own as a classy, well-controlled, meticulously crafted piece of work.

The monster, revealed to be one of the carny's own children (surprise!) manages to both horrify us and elicit pitiable sympathies for its wretchedness. The monster makeup is highly original and frightening and manages to be quite transfixing whenever it appears.

Although not a genre classic by any means, *Funhouse* still clearly shows the steady, knowing hand of an exceptional director exercising his craft to the highest order.

## THE FURY



1978, d: Brian DePalma, 118 m.

Very stylish, flashy conspiracy caper that comes on like gangbusters only to fizzle out during the last act due to a hopelessly contrived, bewildering storyline. Andrew Stevens and Amy Irving are two youths gifted with awesome psychic powers that several governmental agencies would like to exploit for military and espionage reasons. Kirk Douglas is the father who tries to get to the bottom of things when his son is kidnapped and held incommunicado by a bizarre, ultra secret government operation headed by the appropriately sinister-looking John Cassavetes. DePalma covers much of the territory he did in his previous effort *Carrie*, only this time the telekinetic activities are far more spectacular and photogenic.

The plot starts out as a slam-bang international espionage thriller only to unravel later on because of DePalma's inability to pull all the disparate elements of his tricky screenplay later. There's simply an over-emphasis on international intrigue, paranoia, clandestine operations by bizarre government agencies, and a few too many wildly improbable sequences.

The film has a commanding power though, and the typical grandstanding at the climax by DePalma mo-

mentarily makes you feel quite satisfied with the proceedings.

Fine effects by Rick Baker and some spooky lighting and camera work only seem to reinforce the idea that DePalma's meticulous stylistic and craftsmanship are somehow hiding his real and personal vision of filmmaking and his inability to tell a convincing story.

It's one hell of a ride to nowhere, though.

## HALLOWEEN ★

1978, d: J. Carpenter, 93 m.

Even this fairly suspenseful, original stalk 'n' slasher shows us just how limiting and derivative the maniac-on-the-loose film really is. Despite the classy, sophisticated direction by Carpenter and fluid, nicely framed camera shots, the film rarely transcends the fact that it is about a big thug murdering teenage girls.

The film set the trend for countless others (almost all pitifully inferior visual debris) including the greedily made, abysmally trashy sequel written by Carpenter and Debra Hill.

However, the film does manage to maintain suspense despite the predictable nature of the violence.

A young boy of seven kills his promiscuous baby-sitter and years later escapes from a mental institution to kill some more promiscuous baby-sitters on Halloween night.

That's about all there is to it, but Carpenter's genuine directorial flair elevates this offering head and shoulder above its imitators.

The film succeeds in being really scary and quite violent though Carpenter's restraint allows us no explicit shots of the murders. This reservation works more effectively here, because more attention is paid to suspense, timing and surprise than to gratuitous blood letting.

Carpenter's eerie, electronic music score further enhances this well made, titillating, minor masterpiece.

## HALLOWEEN III (SEASON OF THE WITCH)

1982, d: Tommy Lee Wallace, 98 m.

A very imaginative, ambitious thriller, related to its two predecessors in name only. Directed by an old friend and associate of John Carpenter's, Tommy Wallace, who previously served as production designer on *Assault on Precinct 13*, *Halloween*, *The Fog*, *Season* is rich in plot details, conspiratorial paranoia and spectacular effects, a very welcome relief to the abysmally wretched *Halloween II*.

Nigel Kneale, an English screenwriter who had scripted the popular *Quatermass* series for British sci-fi fans, supplied the basic storyline for this ingenious tale about an eccentric Irish toymaker who decides to make this Halloween a night no one will ever forget.

Dan O'Herlihy plays the toy and mask-maker with such gusto and sophistication that the screen really comes alive whenever he expounds upon his theories of magic, Stonehenge, Irish customs or his unbridled abhorrence for little children. His nefarious plans include inserting small microchips in each of his popular Halloween masks and activating the device with an electronic signal from a television commercial to be broadcast at a time when all kiddies will be watching.

The effects by Tom Burman's studio are squishy and explicit and the rest of the film has such a nicely lit and photographed classiness to it that it betrays the fact it was made for a rock-bottom \$2.5 million.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME

1981, d: J. L. Thompson, 108 m.

Surprisingly effective thriller starring Melissa Sue Anderson, little

darling of TV's "Little House on the Prairie." Despite this bit of casting and a grotesque, sleazy ad campaign - "six of the most bizarre murders you will ever see . . . .," *Happy Birthday* manages to surprise, thrill and entertain in healthy doses.

An excruciatingly painful-to-watch brain surgery sequence, a shishkabob skewer through the mouth and a well-attended zombie-like birthday party are just a few of the cheaper thrills to keep you following the story.

The well-written screenplay offers the obligatory visceral moments of shock as well as subtler shadings of irony and black humor which make the ending even sweeter to savor.

Many of Melissa Sue's upper echelon, snooty classmates are being murdered and they all had something in common. Though it takes the entire 108 minutes to unravel the truth, the revelation and the deliciously twisted ending are well worth the wait. Financed and shot in Canada, the film also boasts good production values and suitably scary effects by the Tom Burman Studios.

## HAUNTING OF JULIA (FULL CIRCLE)

1976, d: R. Loncraine, 96 m.

A very satisfying, well-developed occult thriller by Peter Straub (*Ghost Story*, etc.) about a woman haunted by the spirit of her dead child who choked and died on a piece of food after having an emergency, unsuccessful tracheotomy performed on her by her mother with a steak knife.

The feeling of terror and foreboding is subtly developed throughout the film and the very convincing, able acting by Keir Dullea and Mia Farrow as the heartbroken parents lends to its overall credibility.

Don't expect any cheap shots or gratuitous violence because this little thriller is in another class. Do expect a nicely crafted, well-written ghost

story with a beautifully staged and understated "twist" ending. A nice, intelligent effort, effectively exploring the shadow world where our worst fears and nightmares hide amidst the certainties and banalities of everyday existence.

## HE KNOWS YOUR ALONE



1980, d: A. Mastriaonni, 93 m.

The gimmick in this well-handled, above-average stalk 'n' slasher is that the victims are usually all brides-to-be slain on the eve of their weddings by, presumably, a luckless schmuck who was abandoned at the last moment by his bride-to-be. First time director Armand Mastriaonni (brother of Marcello) succeeds in maintaining mystery and suspense in a film that could easily have become a routine, mindless snuff film.

Good twist ending, reminiscent of the depressingly cynical, ironic climax to Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, makes one feel though not in the presence of genius, merely well satisfied with a competently crafted little film that delivers more than its share of thrills and surprises.

Look for Tom Hanks as a mortician's assistant.

## HELLRAISER



1987, d: Clive Barker, 95 m.

No doubt Stephen King thought he was doing the right thing when he breathlessly gushed that he'd seen "the future of horror" in writer/director Clive Barker; and as a result, it appears all but impossible for Barker's cinematic work to escape the prodigious shadow cast by that King-sized quote. It doesn't even help Barker's case that in the ensuing years King's blitherings would appear with monotonous regularity on a plethora of feeble genre offerings, either - King said Barker was God, and that's that.

Based on his novella, "The Hell-Bound Heart," Barker's directorial debut (he had scripted both *Underworld* and *Rawhead Rex* previously) is brimming with stylistic flourishes, perverse sado-masochistic couplings, gorgeously gruesome rituals and harrowing glimpses of a netherworld populated by a righteously kinky clan of uniformed pain-junkies. It is lacking, however, in narrative logic and rhythmic pacing, and seems fitfully episodic throughout. While Barker is a real master of establishing a truly frightful and fascinatingly original scenario, he doesn't seem to know what to do with it.

*Hellraiser* is rife with promise, too - unveiling a genuinely horrific, surreal alternate universe where Pain is King - but Barker can't sustain his illusions without resorting to a convenient and familiar body-count formula employed by countless slasher flicks.

When a bored, sexual hedonist summons demons via an ancient and mysterious puzzle-box, a frenzied, full-throttled descent into metaphysical dementia is promised - but then summarily withdrawn. But there is no denying the power of Barker's hellish imagination - the sulfurous den of the Cenobites; the transformation of Frank Crosser from slime-puddle to freshly-flayed fornicator, and the twisted, queasy sexuality of *Hellraiser*'s subversive anti-heroes - all bear witness to a mind of ferociously intimidating potential. Barker has difficulty with his linear logic and narrative cohesion (again in evidence with the truly awful *Nightbreed*) and tends to lose himself in various splashy set-pieces that create a great mood - but are unable to sustain it.

*Hellraiser* remains a flawed but admirable near-miss; a work nearly as problematic as its mercurial director/fantasist/dream-weaver/auteur.

## HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER



1986, d: John McNaughton, 90 m.

Shot in 16mm for around \$120,000, this punishing, in-your-face tale of sociopathic degeneracy and nihilistic mayhem sat on a shelf for years because the monied chumps who financed the picture were pissed it wasn't a "tits 'n' ass slasher flick." Figures. They're probably consultants now for New Line Cinema.

Very, very loosely based on the real-life adventures of one Henry Lee Lucas, a gap-toothed, pus-headed hillbilly mutant who claimed to have murdered over 300 people (he later recanted), this *Henry* stars Michael (*Eight Men Out, Sea of Love*) Rooker in a frighteningly intense, volcanic performance guaranteed to scorch the paint right off your walls. Though Henry is a cold-blooded, steely-eyed reptilian killer, he still adheres to his own hopelessly skewed moral code; reacting suddenly and viciously to acts he perceives as "in-human" (i.e., incest and necrophilia). Despite the fact that much of the real nastiness takes place off-screen, showing only the aftermath, two sequences in particular seem destined for the MPAA's shit list. During a chilling "home invasion" sortie, Henry's scabrous pal Otis becomes sexually aroused when appraising the corpse of the woman he has just strangled. That sequence and the subsequent video replay (they *taped* the fuckin' thing) will make your skin crawl. Later, when Otis playfully attempts to pork his poor little sister, Henry erupts with a gale-force fury and repeatedly stabs him in such a prolonged, excruciating sequence that you'll feel as though the blade broke off between one of your own ribs.

Never a pretty sight, *Henry* is a merciless, numbing descent into a

minefield of criminal pathology where only the truly mad survive.

# THE HILLS HAVE EYES

## THE HILLS HAVE EYES ★

1977, d: W. Craven, 90 m.

A horrifying, genuinely creepy thriller from the director of *Last House on the Left*. A suburban family on vacation gets stranded in the desert and preyed upon by Manson-types who threaten to cannibalize the young couple's month-old baby. Lots of pandering, gory effects, but filled with a sense of realistic dread and convincing paranoia. Basically a similar formula of revenge was used in Craven's first feature, the notorious *Last House* though it works far more effectively here.

A hard-core, uncompromisingly brutal film.

## HOUSE ON SORORITY ROW ★

1983, d: M. Rosman, 90 m.

Don't worry, the nice atmospheric establishing shots immediately overcome the unknown-film-with-a-shitty-title syndrome and set the tone for a nicely handled classy little thriller by a 24-year old DePalma protege, Mark Rosman, who also wrote the twisting, surprisingly literate script. Although the storyline is somewhat standard stuff, the editing, camera work and frequent twists in the plot are unnervingly original.

The sorority sisters are planning a year-end party and the house mother wants them all out of the house in 24 hours. The girls, of course, are unaware of the tragedy that befell their seemingly puritanical house mother

twenty years before and which continues to torment her unceasingly. The "big surprise" is quite a letdown and brings to mind several other films with the same mother-son aberrant bonding theme; but fortunately, this one is stylish and energetic enough to overcome this tired plot point and still manage to break a little new ground as far as scares and surprises go.

A satisfying little film with a very refined sense of direction and style - pretty rare in today's exploitation field and even rarer in films with clunky titles like this one.

## THE HOWLING ★

1981, d: Joe Dante, 91 m.

Truly a connoisseur's delight. A fresh, vigorous updating of the werewolf myth with unparalleled, spectacular transformation footage. Director Joe Dante creates a refreshingly hip, sensual and horrific scenario and pays tribute to people and films of this genre, in addition to scaring the hell out of you. Dick Miller (a Corman regular), John Sayles, John Carradine, Slim Pickens, and Forrest Ackerman all make cameo appearances of unusual thoroughness.

Rob Bottin's special effects are mesmerizing, pulse-pounding and truly unforgettable. This transformation scene is so beautifully done, so spectacularly seductive in its thoroughness and realism that it is practically transcendent. The gruesome sounds accompanying the sequence lend a very grating, convincing air to the proceedings.

The film's success owes much to the sprightly, off-the-cuff script by John Sayles (*Return of the Seacaucus Seven, Alligator, Battle Beyond the Stars, The Challenge*) who never misses a chance to insert a tongue firmly in cheek. A rich, rewarding, thoroughly enjoyable film filled with little details and touches that true

horror buffs can savor over repeated viewings. Hats off to Dante and crew for reviving the lycanthropic epic in such a brashly original, entertaining manner.

Stay until after the credits for Dante's little reward for us fanatics who stay until the lights come on . . . . a short clip from the original *Wolf Man* where the gypsy lady tells Lon Chaney, Jr. . . . . "Go now and heaven help you."

A very, very funny, scary, imaginative film brilliant in knowledge of the classic techniques of screen horror as well as reminding us of the excitement, the mystery and the power of the movies to constantly enthrall and amaze us with glimpses of things in and beyond our wildest dreams.

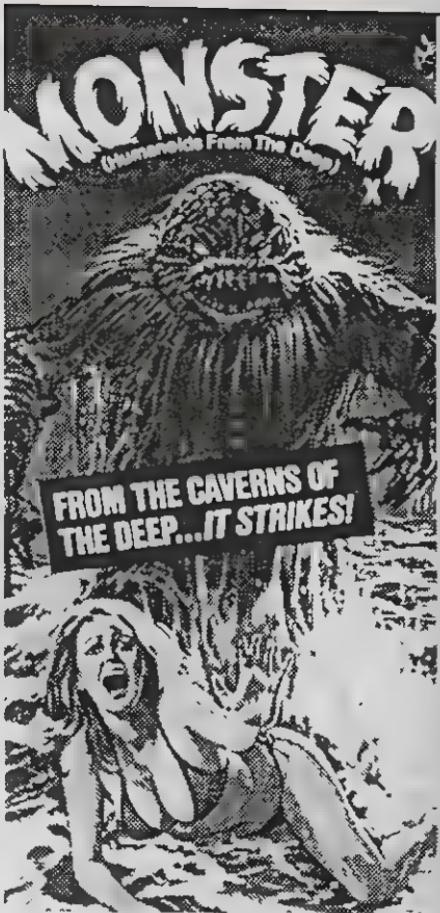
One of the best, don't miss it.

## HUMANOIDS FROM THE DEEP

1980, d: B. Peeters, 80 m.

An eclectic mixture of shock, sex, gore, ecology, satire and fun served up by producer Roger Corman. This film succeeds admirably simply because it never becomes so heavy-handed as to sabotage the rather flimsy and unbelievable storyline. Nevertheless, with the assistance of Rob Bottin's special makeup effects, earnest performances by Doug McClure and Vic Morrow, and a horde of very spirited, horny monsters, the film's shortcomings are turned into advantages and we are all along for a merry ride.

The director, Barbara Peeters, complained that Corman had inserted several of his typical sexist, titillation scenes after she had submitted the director's cut, but Corman never made "good taste or restraint" part of his vocabulary. The first-time director handles the action and pacing well, including a fine opening montage over the credits, and seems very



comfortable handling the threadbare plot concerning the revenge of some salmon-men who kill boys and yes . . . . copulate with their girlfriends in the missionary position . . . . yes, slobbering, gnashing, tails-a-whumpin' fornication!

Rob Bottin was getting his chops down before future major assignments like *The Thing* and *The Howling* were offered. The creatures he built are pretty credible and even scary even under repeated and sustained exposure. The gore effects are plentiful, but so is the deliberate sense of parody. The effects are never as threatening or menacing as say, *Alien*, which is one off the many films *Humanoids* has borrowed from. The sudden ending is really no sur-

prise by now, but it's fun and you still might jump a little.

This isn't a film that teases you for forty minutes with quick glimpses of the creatures and holds out to the very end to let you see the entire thing, either. There are at least a dozen of the creatures at times (all different sizes) and the same craftsmanship seems to have gone into all the suits. Bottin deserves special attention because of the prolific nature of his job and for the thoroughness he instilled into each effect considering the minuscule budget he had to work with. There are some genuinely classy shots of the monsters on the loose that will hold their own against many a big budget picture.

Very satisfying, cheap thrills.



## I DRINK YOUR BLOOD

1971, d: David Durston, 83 m.

Rarely seen in its original, uncut form and known primarily for its inclusion on a notorious Jerry (*I Spit On Your Grave*) Gross - fueled double bill with *I Eat Your Skin*, this mean spirited, vicious little film still retains its bristling intensity some two decades after its initial drive-in release. When threatened with an "X" rating (for violence, not sex) by the MPAA, the film was cut, re-edited and padded with additional footage to replace the offensive bits. And no

wonder; films about Satanic hippie cult murderers were not exactly celebrated by either the entertainment community nor a world left reeling in the wake of the Manson-inspired cataclysm visited upon the homes of Leo La Bianca and Sharon Tate.

A roving band of acid-drenched Satanists led by a frothing, *freakozoid robustus* named Horace Bones (essayed by a chap called "Bhaskar" in a truly possessed performance) invade a small town and deliberately dose some old fart with some of Leary's lemonade. The rube's 12 year-old son exacts his revenge by injecting some meat pies with a syringe filled with the blood of a rabid dog, sending the hippie mutants on a munchie-run to Hell.

Amazingly twisted, grotesque and gory, the film no doubt caused severe and acute constipation among the MPAA for its scenes of torture, mutilation, rat-barbecuing, devil worship and deviant juvenile retribution. Even experienced hippie tripmeisters were bound to be somewhat alarmed by a film that featured foaming-at-the-mouth hardhats armed with axes, hammers and wrenches conducting a search-and-destroy mission against any longhairs found in their free-fire zone.

Still unavailable through legitimate video sources, this thoroughly creepy and remarkably jaundiced exercise in personal and social disintegration still remains on the cutting-edge of contemporary fright despite its thoroughly dated, topical nature.

## INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS

1978, d: P. Kaufman, 115 m.

Well-done, updated and expanded version of the classic 1956 film offers superlative performances,

crackling suspense and cool special effects by Tom Burman. The story has been changed and "modernized" considerably but still remains attentive and faithful to the original theme of alien "pod people" assuming a human's likeness when the victim falls asleep.

The opening sequence showing the alien spores being released in outer space is foreboding yet beautiful and immediately gives the film a totally different perspective than the original. Watch for cameo performances by the star of the 1956 version, Kevin McCarthy (as what else? An imperiled, panicked "regular guy") and the director, Don Siegel, as a cab driver.

Kaufman is a very talented, invigorating director, and though this film is a bit over-long (the original *Body Snatchers* was only 80 minutes) and flawed somewhat during the final act, he proves his real worth with his next film, the supremely enjoyable, delightfully refreshing *The Wanderers* in 1979.

## THE LAST HORROR FILM

1983, d: David Winters, 95 m.

A real off-beat, tricky little horror mini-classic from a decidedly non-horror fan, writer-director-producer David Winters, this film has lots of really fresh, inventive ideas as well as a very unorthodox approach to horror filmmaking. Veteran sleazo Joe Spinell is an obsessed taxi driver with delusions of cinematic grandeur and a fixation on a beautiful horror starlet (Caroline Munro).

He travels to the Cannes Film Festival to further pester her about his movie-making ideas and at this point *The Last Horror Film* becomes a dazzling, kinetic mini-documentary of the famous film fest. Many of the stunts and sequences were shot amidst the crowds and events at

Cannes and they are very uniquely appealing and refreshingly, almost candidly, handled with an unusual flair by director Winters.

Joe Spinell completely redeems his repulsive, abhorrent role in *Maniac* and manages to be quite adept at black comedy and slapstick. Many of the sequences are not what they appear to be, as a wry, ironic mood permeates the film and enhances even the most ordinary scenes.

Several sequences are really so cleverly staged that we're never sure where the fun ends and the horror begins.

Spinell's mother has a supporting role and some of their trans-Atlantic phone conversations are a real howl. It also includes one of the best bits of chainsaw mayhem ever filmed.



## LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT ★

1972, d: Wes Craven, 91 m.

A very repulsive but necessary entry. Craven has said that the film reflects the malevolence and hostility prevalent during the Vietnam era, yet this only partly explains the sadistic and voyeuristic nature of this movie.

The film makes us a silent witness to countless atrocities ravaged upon two young women (of course) whose only apparent crime was trying to score a little pot on the way to a rock concert. They are viciously preyed

upon by four escaped psychopaths who torture and kill them and then mistakenly return to one of the girl's houses to ask for assistance when they experience some car trouble. The parents eventually get wise that the psychos have murdered their daughter and wreak havoc on the trio by chainsaw, electric shock, knives and castration.

The film is criminally manipulative in the respect that the crowd cheer the parents as they even more callously and viciously murder the trio in revenge. A shameless gimmick to supposedly rid your guilt as you thoroughly enjoy gory violence committed with the "right attitude" to the "right, deserving people." The film lacks any subtlety or any kind of dramatic structure. It simply is a distasteful horror movie documentary of mass slaughter. The production values are poor; it's abysmally edited because of so many cuts by so many different people, and nearly a totally irredeemable film.

The film was in the vanguard of the movement to more explicit horror and mayhem as well as returning to the treatment of man as the ultimate monster capable of unspeakable horrors and madness.

One of the few redeeming facts of this sordid film is the pairing of apprentice horror directors Wes Craven and Sean Cunningham for the first time. The other redeeming fact is, I think, the short 91 minutes running time. Supposedly based on Ingmar Bergman's classic, *The Virgin Spring*, the film's unceasing sadism makes it one of the most repugnant "horror" films ever made.

## LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE

1973, d: John Hough, 95 m.

One of the classy, stately English horror films, intelligently written by noted genre author Richard

Matheson, about strange occult happenings at a supposedly cursed house.

This is a skillfully rendered film, wise and provocative, building up suspense and mystery slowly and believably. Four researchers agree to investigate the phenomena in the house and allow us to observe the steadily building drama and puzzling occurrences through many different sets of scientific values.

Full of a rich, sinister ambience of the creeping unknown, this film is almost in the same class as Robert Wise's occult masterpiece, *The Haunting*, though the presence of the redoubtable Roddy McDowell would seemingly automatically disqualify this entry from a four-star status.



## THE LIVING DEAD AT MANCHESTER MORGUE

1974, d: Jorge Grau, 93 m.

This multi-titled (*Let Sleeping Corpses Lie, Don't Open the Window*, etc.) Spanish-Italian production is one of a very rare breed - now nearly extinct - an intelligent, thinking man's horror film.

Oxymoronic buzzwords aside, Grau's dead-on approach to the zombie sub-genre shuns rampant exploitation and double-digit body counts in favor of sharply-drawn characters; a sense of mounting terror and sustained suspense, and some surprisingly adept observations of a society on the brink of apocalypse. Which, of course, is not to say that it's just some moisture-free affair full of portentous ideals and soci-political correctness - no, indeed - it's also a seminal splatter film thanks to the sanguinary skill of FX maestro Giannetto DeRossi, whose slippery slate includes: eye-gougings, breast-rippings, eviscerations and axe-whackings, all very graphic for their time.

Director Grau also jettisons Romero's rather nebulous explanation for re-animation and offers a rather precise, though admittedly quasi-scientific approach to the living dead. The government has been testing ultra-sonic equipment for use as an agricultural pest-Terminator when an unwanted side-effect surfaces - you got it - bugs die, the dead rise.

Unfortunately, Grau's unique and worthy contribution to zombie lore has been hamstrung by indifferent distribution, and for many years its availability was limited to release on Japanese import laser disc. Luckily, this is the full-length, wide-screen version, although A.D.D. Video finally released an edited, cruddy transfer of the film in 1992 under the title *The Living Dead*.

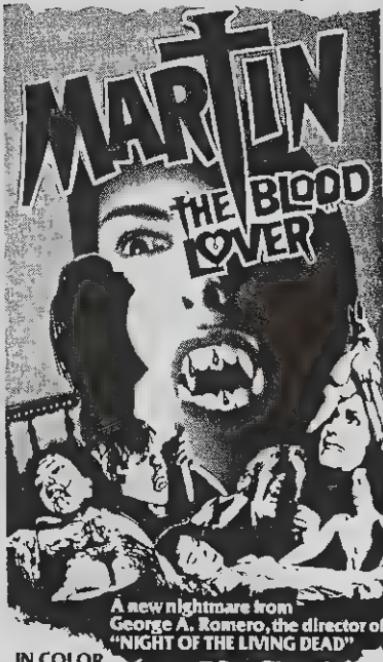
Seek and ye shall find.

## MARTIN

1976, d: George Romero, 95 m.

Risking the wrath of hordes of zombie junkies from around the world, *Martin* can arguably be considered to be Romero's best, most fully-realized work. It is a very personal, very low-key; but com-

He Could be the boy next door...



pling, forthright and honest to a fault. There are no heroes - and no real villains, either. It's never quite that simple, whether in film or real life.

*Martin* (John Amplas) is a confused, brooding teenager who imagines himself a "vampire" to help compensate for his off-kilter behavior and psychosexual fantasies. He must kill his women in order to possess them; but his murderous deeds are assuaged by his overactive and often fanciful imagination where he envisions himself as an Old World sanguinary romantic. These "flashbacks," shot in stunning and evocative black and white, rank among Romero's most striking cinematic imagery ever.

This film, heavily steeped in adolescent sexual confusion, clashing social conventions and the bleakest irony, is light years away from

Romero's monosyllabic dictum of "kill the brain and you kill the ghoul." Martin may be a ghoul of sorts, but it is his lonely, yearning heart that leads him to his inevitable doom.

Romero also plays the part of the affable priest, Father Howard, while FX maestro Tom Savini (working on his first Romero project) awkwardly romances the director's real life wife, Christine Forrest.

## MASSACRE AT CENTRAL HIGH

1976, d: Renee Daalder, 85 m.

Relatively bloodless tale of a student cliques is boosted out of banality by a sly, adventuresome plot, good sense of irony and effortless acting by the young cast. Derrel Maury is a loner on campus who watches in amazement as his fellow students are bullied and humiliated by a gang of toughs, only to finally retaliate with as much viciousness and stupidity as the original perpetrators.

Maury sets a good example for the mousey students by creatively wasting the toughest ringleaders in his obsessed, search-and-destroy mission to bring "peace" to the campus. He doesn't count on the brow-beaten students suddenly becoming a vengeful lynch mob and making the former bullies look like Cub Scouts in comparison. The film is kind of understated, subtle little morality play with lots of good, unusual twists and a fine grasp of elemental black comedy.

The movie is also consistently surprising, in control and done with far more style and cunning than the title may indicate. Though hardly a classic, *Massacre* still offers fairly nifty teenage hi-jinks, good explosions and a very Hitchcock-like sense of the absurd.

## MEET THE FEEBLES

1990, d: Peter Jackson, 95 m.

When director Peter Jackson's first effort, the gorgeously gross and eclectic *Bad Taste* made its State-side splash, few sauceheads would be prepared for what Jackson had in mind for a follow-up. In a deliberate and wildly unconventional move, the New Zealander opted for a project even more audacious and controversial than his freshman effort - a fuckin' puppet movie!

Written in a fever-dream mindset after financing fell through on his cherished zombie opus *Braindead*, Jackson and fellow scripter Danny Mulheron (who plays Heidi, the lovesick hippo in *Feebles*) concocted a terminally-bent, side-splittingly perverse puppet massacre scenario that not only confounded genre expectations but would also prove to be a near-impossible sell for timid distributors who gagged on the film's raunchy tone. Apparently, no one knew just what to do with a movie filled to bursting with fornicating insects, mealy-mouthed, shit-scarfing flies; dope-dealing walruses; psychopathic weasels; barfing bunnies and machine gun-toting hippos.

Jackson takes us backstage while the decidedly non-human cast of *The Feebles Variety Hour* prepares for a major television broadcast. Nothing is spared here; no rock left unturned. And what crawls out is a remarkable plethora of foul-mouthed, promiscuous, dope-shooting, anarchic sodomists that remake Pasolini's *Salo: The 120 Days of Sodom* in puppetoon terms. There are some simply hilarious vignettes here; including an ingeniously inspired *Deer Hunter* parody launched by a junkie-frog's hot-wired, convulsing imagination during a cold turkey, flashback episode.

The film ends with a show-stopping song-and-dance ditty entitled "Sodomy," performed while a jealous, blubbering hippo with an automatic rifle splatters most of the remaining cast.

Southgate Entertainment, who had previously garnered praise from the cognoscenti for acquiring the rights to both Dario Argento's *Opera* and Michele Soavi's *The Church*, were quickly shit-listed for refusing to distribute *The Feebles* after a set of disastrous screenings. When pressed, Southgate execs bleated about its "repellent, repulsive and thoroughly disgusting tone." Yeah, okay . . . they're absolutely *right* this time but a qualifying coda *must* be added to the list of charges brought against *The Feebles*. The film is also a brave, delirious, totally original effort by a truly gifted, renegade auteur who adamantly refuses to pucker-up to self-righteous buttheads.

Available on Japanese import laser disc.

## NIGHTMARE

1981, d: R. Scavolini

Another *Halloween*-type rip-off although done with some degree of skill and cunning. A similar formula of a child witnessing a terrifying murder only to have it haunt him years later. What it lacks in originality it makes up for in explicitly gruesome, convincing effects which leave nothing to the imagination. Especially noteworthy is the unbearably realistic hunting axe in the face that manages to gag you and fascinate you with its thoroughness. I've never quite been able to figure out how these micro-budget horror-schlocko movies come up with such outstanding effects.

Some, not all, of the effects in *Nightmare* are on a level with Savini, Fullerton or Burman and what seems

even more amazing is the quantity of effects in these films.

Not as bad as one might imagine, but only for hard-core splatter aficionados.



## A NIGHTMARE

1985, d: Wes Craven, 92 m.

After five wearying sequels, climaxing with the stillborn and redundant *Freddy's Dead*, it is somewhat difficult to recall the original artistry and fevered imagination lurking within the frames of Wes Craven's daring, landmark effort. Child killer Freddy Krueger knew when to shut up back them; his infrequent, darkly comic one-liners helped catalyze a particularly gruesome and terrifying moment rather than detract and de-energize it with the ceaseless cacklings and smart-assed repartee employed in subsequent entries. Krueger was an astonishingly fresh and original boogeyman at the outset, and his ability to enter your dreams and pull

your plug whilst you slept was a truly frightening concept.

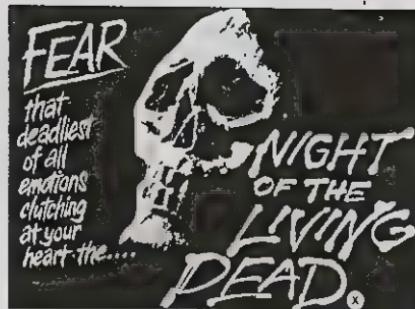
Craven's film is suffused with ghastly, surreal imagery, chilling paranoia and a sense of implacable doom all but completely drained from Krueger's corpse by the time the series limped to its anti-climactic, cynical conclusion in *Part 6*. A damn shame, too. Krueger was genuinely scary; a thoroughly modern monster fueled by hate, despair and longing - never satisfied, never sated until he and his victim became one in the dark abyss of the nightmare. Though it is definitely to Craven's credit that he had "pushed the envelope" a bit by incorporating the "rubber reality" of the dream state, the gimmick soon grew tiresome and cliched; not only in the series but in his post-*Nightmare* work like *Deadly Friend*, *Shocker* and *The Serpent and the Rainbow*.

As the series "progressed," the films began to rely heavily upon outlandish and freaky FX set pieces as the casts became nothing more than expendable slasher-fodder. When Krueger became a lucrative franchise for New Line, the gut-level terror and unrepentant nastiness of The Gloved One evident in Craven's original, succumbed to a brand new monster - the Marketing Department. And, unfortunately, somewhere in a *Nightmare-less* future, *someone* is bound to begin speculation upon the real fright factor of a snickering, razor-gloved, crispy comedian whose likeness had appeared on nearly everything short of breakfast cereals, kiddie night-lights and nursing bras.

## NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

1968, d: George Romero, 96 m.

Certainly one of the quintessential walking dead films of all time, this gem is also a tribute to the highly



original independent mind of George Romero. Made in Pittsburgh on a budget under \$200,000 by Romero and several associates all investing money and equipment, *Night* is a terrifying, insufferably claustrophobic, menacing kind of zombie *film noir*.

Due to a hurriedly explained apparent satellite mishap, the dead are coming back to life and cannibalizing anyone living or dead who happens by, finally laying siege to an old battered farmhouse where seven survivors are making their last stand. The cast is populated with Romero's friends and neighbors; and with the deliberately grainy black and white photography and hand-held camera shots, a sense of immediacy and pseudo-documentary drama are infused into the film.

Most striking, though, aside from the fairly explicit scenes of violence and cannibalism, is Romero's ability in handling the unheralded cast and making their scenes together honest and believable.

The sequences with zombies stalking en masse through the smoky forests and breaking into the farmhouse are still hair-raising and blood-curdling. Even the really amateurish acting on the parts of some of the bit players, especially in describing the zombies . . . ("Yeah, they're dead . . . they're all messed up . . .") is not insulting, but merely home-grown paranoia and disbelief effectively portrayed by non-hero, every-

## George Romero's Original Horror Classic!



day characters.

The swift and deadly ironic twist to the ending shows Romero was not simply intent on retelling another tale of the walking dead but commenting on the suspicions, hostility, selfishness and paranoia inherent in us all.

A solid, satisfying piece of horror filmmaking, *Night* prepares us for the fully blown zombie apocalypse of Romero's sequel, *Dawn of the Dead*, with humor much blacker and blood much redder.

## NIGHT WARNING

1982, d: William Asher, 96 m.

A definite sleeper hit, this tricky little slice 'n' dicer is exceptionally well written and acted, including some outrageous big knife mayhem as well as the most harrowing car crash sequence I've ever seen. Basically a story about a psychotic mother's over-protectiveness (to say the least) towards her teenage son, this film is constantly shifting gears between madness, homosexual para-

noia and unexpectedly vicious violence. Susan Tyrell's portrayal of the unbalanced mother is absolutely riveting, exposing her character through a series of strange nuances, goofy expressions and a totally unpredictable, untamed rage.

Allegedly the "Best Horror Film of 1982," according to the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror, this little gem really delivers.

(Aka: *Butcher, Baker, Nightmare Maker*)

## THE OMEN



1976, d: Richard Donner, 111 m.

Without a doubt the best of the forlorn trilogy, and indeed, one of the classiest big-budget horror films of all time. A very lucid, nearly believable telling of the fundamentalist Christian Apocalyptic Conspiracy tale concerning the birth of the Anti-Christ and the coming to power of a Satanic force in the contemporary political arena. Stellar performances by Gregory Peck, Lee Remick and David Warner lend the much-needed credence to this rather unlikely tale, but the spectacular stunts and effects never let your attention wander. This film contains probably the most elaborate, cleverly staged decapitations of all time; a scene which is almost as unforgettable as Regan rotating her head 360 degrees in *The Exorcist*.

The powerful graveyard scene, when Peck and Warner find the remains that are indeed those of the prophesied Jackal-mother contains a truly shattering, heart-stopping sequence; one that brings to mind everyone's primitive and basic fears about places of the dead.

What the film lacks in logic and believability is compensated for by Donner's slick, manipulative, yet engaging manner of direction and a story that manages to build suspense, intrigue and fear so fast that you

don't really have time to examine the gaping plot holes.

Classy, mainstream horror at its best.

**Lost River Lake was a thriving resort - until they discovered...**



## **PIRANHA**

1978, d: Joe Dante, 92 m.

A nicely paced, surprising little film from a former editor at Roger Corman's New World Pictures, Joe Dante. This is the first pairing of Director Dante and special effects man Rob Bottin and the result is a nifty, though highly derivative little thriller, although the minuscule budget shows a little bit too often.

The ravenous hordes of killer piranha turn out to be maybe a dozen of the little rubber fellows tied on rods and swimming in stiff, awkward formations. However, Dante and Bottin (whose next film *The Howling* is a certified genre classic) manage to bring this film to life in an energetic, original way. Bottin's special effects are exemplary considering his bud-

get and experience, and Dante manages to both pay tribute and gently ridicule other "B" films of this genre, thanks to a very literate script and good performances by a veteran cast.

## **POLTERGEIST**

1982, d: Tobe Hooper, 114 m.

An overwrought, spectacular misfire by a contemporary master of excess, the crown prince of the million-dollar gimmick, Steven Spielberg. Though the director's credit belongs to Hooper, Spielberg wrote, produced and storyboarded the film and supervised its production with such an apparent tight fist that very little of Hooper's considerable skills are allowed to take shape.

The film seems to bear many similarities to Richard Matheson's story for an early *Twilight Zone* episode entitled "Little Girl Lost," in which a suburban family's youngest daughter becomes "entrapped" within the house; she cannot be seen or located yet her cries and pleas are heard by all. *Poltergeist* heaps loads of unimpressive carnival tricks and assorted hokum upon this thin storyline; but ultimately we have lost our concern for the beleaguered family under an avalanche of special effects wizardry. Oddly, the film seems to be most promising in the first half hour before the Industrial Light and Magic Festival comes to town. ("If they think one or two old rotting corpses is scary, wait 'till they see twenty or thirty poppin' up all over!")

Excessive gimmickry, questionable casting in major support roles and gaping holes in plot and logic makes *Poltergeist* a major disappointment. The ridiculously overrated monster tree that eats the boy, barfs him up, and then gets lost in a *Wizard of Oz*-style tornado, as well as the phony house destruction at the climax are simply grandstand tricks designed

to take your mind away from the sophomoric logic used to float this overblown trifile.

## PROM NIGHT

1981, d: Paul Lynch, 91 m.

Another slasher film but done with a degree of style and knowledge of the genre. Reasonable ensemble acting, some semblance of plot and several well-orchestrated scares makes *Prom Night* nothing to brag about, yet far classier than others of the teenager-in-peril offerings of the '80s.

A masked, gravelly-throated slasher (sound familiar?) is killing some of the campus hot shots and nobody knows who; though we are presented with an assortment of likely candidates and don't really find out the true culprit until guess which night?

Leslie Nielson is properly concerned and sober as the school's principal and Jamie Lee Curtis is convincing as the disco-fied prom queen who still manages to look persuasively imperiled even in her teenage designer underwear.

Some nice camerawork, good story-telling and believable acting make *Prom Night* just a cut above.

# PSYCHO II

## PSYCHO II

1983, d: Richard Franklin, 109 m.

Expertly crafted, effective and chilling sequel, a tribute to the *spirit* of Hitchcock without aping the master's hand.

Norman Bates has been released as "harmless and cured" after 22 years of incarceration and the sister of his original shower victim is out to have him recommitted at *any* cost. What

follows is a twisted, convoluted plot with loads of precipitous detouring along the way.

The violence is shocking and surprisingly graphic including a knife-through-the-mouth and an almost unbearable "knife handling" sequence that *guarantees* the shivers.

Fluid and inspired filmmaking, top-notch casting and taut scripting make one's return visit to the Bates Motel a very accommodating stay.

## Q

## (THE WINGED SERPENT)

1982, d: Larry Cohen, 92 m.

Writer-Producer-Director Larry Cohen's entertaining tale of human sacrifice and the resurrection of an ancient Aztec winged serpent named Quetzocoatyl, who wreaks havoc on New York City and nests in the Chrysler Building. The stop-motion effects by David Allen range from very acceptable to downright awful. One of the flying scenes makes the Pillsbury Doughboy seem to be divinely inspired. This and the fact that you hardly ever get to see the monster are two major shortcomings which nonetheless are offset quite handsomely by Cohen's witty, savvy writing skills and a dazzling performance by Michael Moriarty, who displays a real flair for black comedy. Rarely is an acting job of this caliber seen in such a small scale genre film. Candy Clark, David Carradine and Richard Roundtree are also solidly cast and convincingly realized supporting players.

Though a bit talky and episodic at times, film still succeeds in being fun, scary and entertaining as well as being a modern homage to the old '50s monster films.

## -RE-ANIMATOR-

L'NONRENDISSIMO CHE FA BENISSIMO

## RE-ANIMATOR

1985, d: Stuart Gordon, 86 m.

Expect no journalistic detachment or studied objectivity here - *Re-Animator* is quite simply, one of the best, brightest, bravest, and wettest horror films of the modern era or I'll eat this fucking book, right here, right now. Very loosely drawn from "Herbert West, The Re-Animator," a pulp series of short magazine pieces by H. P. Lovecraft, first-time director Stuart Gordon delivers a gloriously demented, fiendish black comedy about love, death, sex, sin, science and . . . headlessness.

Deliciously and robustly essayed by Jeffrey Combs, Dr. Herbert West is a full-tilt megalomaniac at Miskatonic Medical School; his glowing green re-agent has proven marginally successful in jump-starting recently deceased. West's nemesis, Dr. Carl Hill (David Gale) wants his secret but loses his noggin in the process; later to emerge as one of the kinkiest, most sexually active decapitees on record.

Though *Re-Animator* was Gordon's feature film debut, he was no stranger to the outlandish and macabre - he was a founder and director of Chicago's notoriously avant-garde Organic Theatre, whose reputation for weirdness was already public record. Gordon jumps into this film with both feet and hip-boots; but his charming lack of pretense and his playfulness with the morbid subject matter insure that while *Re-Animator* is certifiably over-the-top it's never far off-the-mark. Justifiably famous for both its queasy "head" sequence and the first on-screen death by intestinal strangulation, *Re-Animator* cannot be regarded simply as some goofball chunkblow noir; it is a masterly, confident modern classic that wears its wit and its wetness right there on its sleeve.

*Released theatrically as an "unrated" feature, there are two additional versions of the film that have also played worldwide: the slightly longer, "R" rated print and a TV version, both of which restore some of the sub-plots excised from the original.*

## THE RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

1985, d: Dan O'Bannon, 91 m.

In an amicable trade-off, George Romero and *Night of the Living Dead* co-scripter John Russo divided the cinematic spoils to their landmark film - Romero kept "Dead" in his title while Russo retained the "Living Dead." Though Russo had penned the novel, "Return of the Living Dead," in 1978, it was Dan (*Alien*, *Blue Thunder*) O'Bannon's original script that finally saw the light of the projector's beam after a long, convoluted struggle to the screen. Originally intended as a Tobe Hooper vehicle, it was O'Bannon who stepped in much later when script re-writes were needed and Hooper dropped out.

O'Bannon's film is a genuine genre oxymoron - a "horror comedy" - that actually works. At the Uneeda Medical Supply house, the freshly deceased become the frisky dead when cannisters of an experimental nerve gas are accidentally ruptured by a pair of dim-witted but ingratiating employees (James Karen and Thom Matthews). While gently parodying Romero's grim approach to zombiehood, O'Bannon's script and direction take on a life and mythos all their own. These zombies are highly-mobile, chatty, tool-using and extremely resourceful in their perpetual quest for "more brains!" This film is character-intensive; with deliciously ribald performances turned in by Karen, Clu Gulager, Don Calfa and Linnea Quigley. When

Quigley does her justifiably famous crypt-top boogie to the strains of a crunching, punkazoid rock tune, you know right away that it's a brave new world o' the dead.

*Return* runs out of gas in the final reel, but it remains a rollicking, inspired and audacious splatfest that simultaneously challenges genre conventions and audience expectations while retaining its wide-eyed love of the horror film. Propelled by a churning, jacked-up score by cutting-edge bands like The Damned, The Cramps and 45 Grave, this fucker really kicks some serious ass.

The splendidly wet FX are by Bill Munns and a very young pup named Tony Gardner, who went on to provide dazzling and original illusions to such films as *The Blob*, *Darkman* and *Army of Darkness*.

A flimsy, wretched sequel directed by Ken (*Shock Waves*) Wiederhorn followed and yet another unwanted installment has been threatened by sequelmeister Brian Yuzna.

## ROSEMARY'S BABY



1968, d: R. Polanski, 136 m.

Talky, over-long horror classic with standout performances by all involved including Ruth Gordon who won an Oscar for best supporting actress. Satanic conspiracy caper involving witchcraft, mysterious pacts, loads of paranoia and a strange pregnancy in modern day Manhattan. Cassavetes is at his nefarious best and Mia Farrow is quite convincing as the innocent surrounded by the Satanic. All of Roman Polanski's films are provoking, thoughtful and done with a gifted hand. I guess I like to think fondly of this one as *Tess Goes to Hell*.

## SCANNERS



1981, d: D. Cronenberg, 102 m.

A very promising, adventuresome thriller marred by a wooden, unsympathetic acting job by the male lead and a rather slow, shuffling middle section. The opening and closing sequences showcasing the mental powers of the scanners are nothing short of magnificent. Master makeup artist Dick Smith designed the incredible "scan-off" sequence at the end where the two most powerful scanners attempt to suck each other's brains dry. Veins burst, eyeballs melt and explode, bodies turn to molten ash from the sheer power of these master scanners, endowed with superhuman mental capabilities of telepathy and telekinesis.

The opening sequence of the film when a classroom demonstration of these prodigious mental powers goes awry will leave you absolutely breathless.

Patrick McGoohan and Michael Ironsides are very good, but the head scanner portrayed by the aptly named Stephen Lack is totally unconvincing and a remarkably *uninteresting* character. A very fascinating idea of scanner armies ruling the world doesn't seem to be fully explored by Croneneberg as the story becomes bogged down by inactivity until the final, spectacular showdown. A nice, subtly ironic ending with coupled with the preceding stunning special effects sequence manages to bring the film home on a very strong note. Cronenberg continues to make fascinating but flawed original films of fiercely imaginative material that do not always live up to their potential.

## THE SENDER



1982, d: Roger Christian, 91 m.

A very inventive, enterprising film about telekinesis, telepathy and paranormal powers from the Oscar-winning art director of *Star Wars*, Roger Christian. The film is intelli-

gent, and refuses to pander to the audience who just wants mayhem and bloodletting.

A young, overly-mothered, troubled psychic with a Christ complex attempts to drown himself to "stop the voices" only to be revived in an emergency room as a panicked amnesiac. When transferred to a mental ward for observation, strange things begin to happen.

The film rarely borrows from other ESP stories and maintains its integrity and sophistication throughout. The horrifying premise that a person can project his hallucinations and nightmares into another's mind is truly terrifying and the power of that malevolence is effectively portrayed in this stylistic, adult thriller.

The effects are first rate, startling and unsettling rather than gruesome; and the acting is surprisingly good throughout with several standout performances by many of the secondary performers with a haunting, deliciously realized role played by Shirley Knight as the sender's overprotective mother.

Highly rewarding, exceedingly well-crafted, suspenseful and intelligent. Strongly recommended.

## THE SHINING

1980, d: S. Kubrick, 146 m.

With most of author Stephen King's frightening story changed beyond recognition, *The Shining* was a real letdown for eager horror fans. Although called "the first masterpiece of horror," it remains a bloated, meandering, soul-less exercise in cinema technique. This simple horror story cost over \$20 million, due to the fact that Kubrick insisted on building the existing hotel's interiors on a soundstage in England, not to mention his alleged habit of shooting 80 takes on one dialogueless scene of a couple crossing a street. Nicholson is as guilty of

mugging and over-acting as he was on his own *Goin' South* - Kubrick and Nicholson must have become fast friends.

The film seems more concerned with the mental disintegration of a hack, alcoholic writer and the ensuing domestic struggles he faces than it does with the more frightening and memorable elements of King's novel.

The cinematography and lighting is marvelous, the exteriors look icy and foreboding and the interiors are all beautifully lush; but it is all mere padding for a nervously thin plotline.

However, the film is not without some positively smashing horrific images including a masterful shot of a corridor of cascading blood, belched forth from an ancient elevator, and the icy terror of Nicholson's nocturnal stalkings with his hunting axe.

The frenetic tracking shot following Danny as he winds his way through the endless hallways on his tricycle is simply tremendous, as are many other scenes magnificently rendered yet still curiously and shamefacedly hollow.

An epic horror story without much horror, *The Shining* is merely an overwrought, shamelessly excessive, mild fright. Possibly a feather in the hat for a lesser director, but for a man of Kubrick's power and mastery, the film is just barely adequate.

## SHOGUN ASSASSIN

1981, d: K Misumi - R. Huston, 90 m.

A quasi-mystical, ultra-violent samurai tale, edited together from two Japanese films of the *Lone Wolf* series. A new soundtrack has been added and careful editing and camera work, the dubbing is not as painful as usual.

Lone Wolf, a samurai warrior betrayed by the emperor, sets out on a

mission of blood-spouting revenge after the Ninja (cult assassins) murder his wife and attempt to assassinate him. The Wolferoo and his five-year old son spend the rest of the film decimating anyone in their path, philosophizing, and making Peckinpah's *Wild Bunch* look like a Disney spin-off.

Amidst the geysers of blood, spraying against majestic sunsets, the two-bit philosophy and the father-son sentimentality, emerges a film so outrageously unique, exciting and adventurous it becomes a kind of East-West fusion of *Dawn of the Dead*, *Kung Fu* and the *Riflemen*.

The violent effects are more fun than convincing (and there are lots of them), but the film's greatest asset is that it never takes itself too seriously, so that you can chuckle and be shocked senseless at the same time. The cloven heads, dismemberment and disembowelments never get too close to reality to risk being so repugnant that you can't enjoy the simple exuberance and good time that this film offers.

## STRANGE BEHAVIOR

1981, d: Michael Laughlin, 98 m.

An odd, amusing little film shot in New Zealand with an international cast in a town dressed up to appear like a small Midwestern city in the United States. Louise Fletcher is a gum-chomping, well-intentioned suburban housewife concerned about her son's odd behavior after he has enlisted himself in one of the university's experimental psychology programs.

The film owes much of its style and content to the numerous 50's "B" movies involving surreptitious medical experimentation by megalomaniacal types; only this film introduces a nifty, sexy twist to the

worn "mad doctor" formula. The sultry, extremely alluring Fiona Lewis plays the doctor with relish, as a cross between Madame Curie and the Dragon Lady with her low-cut cashmere sweaters, high heels, swept-up '50s style hairdo and sensuous, pouting lips. Fiona does indeed wield an impressive hypodermic, purring to her intended victims, "Now . . . relax, this won't hurt a bit . . ." before plunging a 10" needle into their eyes.

Michael Murphy is fine as the puzzled, distraught father trying to unravel the bizarre happenings as his son is pulled deeper and deeper into the sinister mind-control techniques of the university's test center.

An exciting, feverish climax leads to an unexpected twist as Murphy confronts the real evil behind the experimental program.

Originally titled *Dead Kids*, *Strange Behavior* is slickly produced, well-acted and tightly scripted - a knowledgeable, sly homage to '50s genre films without the smirking.

## STREET TRASH?! ★ +

1986, d: Jim Muro, 91 m.

If you fail to see the inherent whimsy and unfettered chuckles in a junkyard game of catch-the-severed-schlong then you'll probably be unable to come to grips with the film's other comic shots at necrophilia, sexual deviancy, alcoholism, flatulence and graphic exsanguination as well. Too bad. Put this book down, now. You're not one of us after all.

Based on director Muro's fifteen-minute student film and scripted by Roy (Document of the Dead) Frumkes, *Street Trash* is a rabid, all-out frontal assault that will leave you punch-drunk and howling for more. Though it's strictly Plot-Lite - winos drink Tenafly Viper; they fall down, they melt - this gloriously swaggering, convulsive chunkblower

# HOLOCAUSTO CANIBAL



ROBERT KERMAN  
FRANCESCA CIARDI  
PERRY PIRKANEN  
DIRECTOR  
RUGGERO DEODATO

EASTMANCOLOR

only goes to show what can be accomplished if you set out to offend and mortify every single element of society. Fat guys, skinny women, bums, dogs, doormen, hoodlums, cops, Vietnam vets, dead folk and fart-blowing entrepreneurs all come under the comic knife - and without anesthesia, too. There is wanton, gratuitous gore laced with such an anarchic, lacerating and unapologetically grotesque worldview that you can't help but bust a gut of your own.

Director Munro went on to become one of Hollywood's most sought-after Steadicam operators, working in such mega-budgeted, monster box-office hits as *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*.

Jim, babe . . . come back - we need ya.

*There is an alternate version of Street Trash available on Japanese import laser disc that reportedly restores some ten minutes of footage cut from the unrated U.S. print.*

## SUSPIRIA

1976, d: Dario Argento, 97 m.

As one of the most rabidly overrated horror films of the modern era, and one usually discussed in breathless, reverential terms by genre aficionados, *Suspiria* is a problematic work destined to remain nearly as enigmatic as its controversial director. No one can deny the film's unbridled, visceral power an evocative use of the candy-colored mis-en-scene; nor fault it for the dizzying camera pyrotechnics and gut-churning, pulsating Goblin score, but *Suspiria* is yet another classic instance of the whole being far less than the sum of its parts. In many ways, it's a difficult film to embrace - it operates within its own peculiar paradigm, unaffected by either dramatic necessity or reality itself.

Marginally the story of an American dance student (the doe-eyed Jessica Harper) in the midst of a witches' coven at a prestigious German ballet school, the film is really about Argento's obsessions with fear, magic, the supernatural and the *frissons* of violent death. Narrative logic is frequently dismissed altogether and reality is merely an annoying subtext in Argento's manic quest to shred one's conventional expectations of the genre.

*Suspiria* was first seen on American screens in a decidedly different form than what was finally released by Magnum Video as the "director's cut" some thirteen years after its initial appearance. The first double-murder is a harrowing case-in-point; it goes on forever in the uncut print, finally climaxing with a vicious close-up of a knife entering an exposed, fibrillating heart in lacerating detail. The subsequent hanging and bisection by sheet glass remains one of the most powerful and unsettling tableaus ever committed to film. Even today, with the emphasis on the craft of makeup and special effects, little could ever be done to improve upon this absolutely horrific and nerve-wracking sequence.

*Suspiria* remains a film of moments; but even then, the pure and uncompromised cinematic genius of Argento is allowed to fully flower, easily eclipsing what many of his contemporaries have spent years and even lifetimes attempting.

*Though available uncut on Japanese laser disc years before its Stateside re-release, connoisseurs were wise to wait for the dramatic wide-screen, letterboxed print also made available in 1989.*

## TENEBRAE

1982, d: Dario Argento, 110 m.

Eschewing the quasi-mystical and



psychic portentousness of previous efforts, Maestro Argento returns to his giallo roots with this straight forward, muscular thriller about a mystery writer confronting his own demons during a series of murders eerily reminiscent of those in his latest book, "Tenebrae." Aided by his staff (genre vet John Saxon and Argento gal-pal Daria Nicolodi), author Peter Neal (a surprisingly effective Anthony Franciosa) launches his own investigation while in Rome on a promotional book tour. Despite the plot-driven mechanics of the film, the real stars remain Argento's breathtaking, serpentine camera movements and his wildly inventive murder sequences - most of which were radically truncated when the film lost twenty minutes of footage on its way to becoming *Unsane*, the retitled, testicle-less U.S. version.

One of Argento's goriest murders ever occurs when an axe-wielding maniac crashes through a window and severs the arm of a woman who howlingly paints her kitchen wall a *very* deep, deep red with her spouting stump. Another remarkable demise has a victim slashed with a straight razor while she dresses, but Argento saves the best for last. In an absolute killer-climax, the murderer is revealed when a splendidly-faked suicide sets the stage for yet another axe-whacking. The film ends on a shrieking, hysterical note that resonates long after the credit crawl.

Wise gore-mets should avoid the shredded U.S. print and instead seek

out the full-length, letterboxed Japanese import laser disc version.

A stunning, exhilarating, visceral showpiece by one of the genre's true visionaries.

## TERROR TRAIN

1980, d: R. Sportiswoode, 97 m.

Nicely photographed stalk and slash entry that stands out because of its moody, smoky, claustrophobic feel and its cast of costumed characters. A fraternity masquerade party is held aboard a train while the (apparent) victim of an earlier prank which backfired is methodically killing his former tormentors, assuming their costume and moving on to the next victim. This is a good gimmick and allows a sinister, threatening feel to permeate even the simplest scene, because you never really know who's under what costume. Jamie Lee Curtis is her usual sincerely threatened self and veteran heavy Ben Johnson as the resolute conductor turned detective-hero adds an air of authority to the proceedings.

The stylish thriller by former cinematographer also features magician David Copperfield.



# THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE



1976, d: Tobe Hooper, 90 m.

Probably the most nightmarish, achingly surreal terror film ever made, *Chainsaw Massacre* set standards for contemporary screen horror that have only rarely been matched.

Shot on a minuscule budget, the film uses an inspiration the sensationalized Ed Gein murder case, Hitchcock's *Psycho*, grave robbing and cannibalism in equal parts and cooks up an incredibly original, absolutely terrifying trip through the macabre Hall of Fame. From the opening voice-over narration, the grisly establishing shot through the credit sequence, you are fully aware of the nightmarish power of this film.

Five youths are careening across Texas in a van and stop by a cemetery to see if any relatives' graves have been tampered with during a desecration spree and from there to investigate an old house owned by the crippled boy's father. A whole host of quirky, eccentric, bizarros join the fracas as supporting players as the momentum and terror begin to swell, never letting up until the final whirling chainsaw pirouette cuts to a black screen.

Stephen King refers to *Chainsaw* as "light years away" from its competitors, which he simply dismisses as films done by "maniacs with cameras." The film will amaze some by its relative bloodlessness and lack of explicit carnage; though, its most horrific scenes are some of the best in any horror film at any time.

Shot on a budget under \$200,000 using students and non-professionals in a sweltering Texas summer, director Hooper manages these elements to his advantage, making its grainy, documentary home movie

RENÉ CHATEAU présente  
APRÈS 5 ANS D'INTERDICTION



# MASSACRE ALA TRONCONNEUSE

UN FILM DE TOBE HOOPER  
VERSION INTEGRALE

feel that much closer to reality.

Truly a masterpiece, one which all contemporary classics of the macabre must be judged against.

# THEATRE OF BLOOD

1973, d: Douglas Hickox, 104 m.

Vincent Price, once again typecast as a raging, ham actor, is simply delightful in this ebullient, rowdy horror-comedy concerning a Shakespearean actor's revenge against the hostile, unappreciative critics who review his plays. The cast is crammed with veteran English actors including Diana Rigg as the sexy and adoring daughter who believes her father to be possessed of a true, unheralded genius for the theatre.

Price decides to liquidate all the critics who have been particularly acidic to his heartfelt performances by employing the manners of murder as prescribed in several Shakespearean tragedies.

The scene where Robert Morley is unknowingly fed his favorite poodle

during a consummate gourmet feast is simply a scream. Everyone in the cast seems to thoroughly enjoy this playful romp; and incidentally, Vincent Price has never been better.

The film is lushly made, with imaginatively grotesque murder scenes and a spectacular, fiery climax adding up to a thoroughly enjoyable, enchanting comedic horror-thriller.



## THE THING

1982, d: John Carpenter, 127 m.

An updated, hi-tech remake of Howard Hawk's classic *The Thing From Another World* (1951). This multi-million dollar, special effects tour de force left audiences feeling very detached and distant from the goings on, despite above-average character development, a classic story and beautiful production values. The film pales in comparison to its predecessor despite the absolutely stunning effects work by Rob Bottin's crew.

The film starts out promisingly enough with Carpenter paying immediate tribute to the original by retaining the burned-out lettering effects of *The Thing* as the titles come on amidst some nice motion-effects work of a flying saucer plummeting

towards earth. Following a mysterious and exciting pursuit of an escaped husky by a helicopter in the opening moments, Carpenter seems intent on alienating the audience by inserting carefully contrived bits of excessive Grand Guignol gore, numbing us to the point of exhaustion. The characters are self absorbed caricatures and one can only observe as a dispassionate voyeur their bloody deaths. Christian Nyby and Howard Hawks gave us flesh and blood and *humanity* in the original.

Carpenter seems to have missed the mark on the basic elements of claustrophobic fear, by refusing to develop the kind of unseen paranoia and terror in favor of showing us *everything* and leaving nothing to our imagination. Carpenter never uses the long, icy, deserted hallways, empty storage rooms, or howling arctic winds as anything but simple inconveniences along the way to knocking us senseless with the "Wow, how'd they do that?" special effects, in all their quivering latex and jelly glory. It's a shame a nice little human interest story couldn't have been developed somewhere amidst the carnage.

Apparently Rob Bottin was given lots of room to expand his vision of the thing after his absolutely masterful work from *The Howling*. Certainly the effects work far outdistances anything we have seen up to this point, but the question is, does it contribute to the fear and terror we should feel in this type of situation? I don't think any of the truly spectacular effects actually scare us near as much as they make us an unwilling voyeur in a sinister magic show.

## TOURIST TRAP

1979, d: David Schmoeller, 85 m.

A rather timid horror tale starring Chuck Connors in a surprisingly adept performance as the crusty, ec-

centric owner of a run-down roadside attraction featuring mannequins and figurines, including his late wife, on display in a historical wax museum.

A group of youths experience car trouble and manage to drop by Connor's place in an effect to enlist some help. Instead, they abuse his hospitality and insist upon snooping around his wax museum. There are several nicely realized scenes of animated mannequins and masks that are truly original and quite nightmarish.

Stephen King lists this film as one of his guilty pleasures and is quite liberal with his praise of this rather predictable, anemic little horror film. However, it is accomplished with a degree of style and a thorough knowledge of suspenseful pacing although I have very little faith in being scared senseless by films rated PG. Another triumph of style over content.

## VIDEODROME



1983, d: D. Cronenberg, 89 m.

Writer-Director Cronenberg's best, most sustained techno-horror film yet, a frightening glimpse of a video-addicted world's more malevolent, darker under-belly. A searing look into violence on television, obsessive, fetishist sex, the future of video, as well as the politics of mass communication; Cronenberg never was one to think small. The intense, well-cast James Woods plays the video pirate who thinks he is on the find of the year when he discovers a clandestine station, supposedly in Thailand, broadcasting snuff films to an exclusive audience of subscribers here in the States. His subsequent investigations answer a few of his questions but raise many more about the nature of violence and man's continued fascination with sex, death and destruction.

The special effects by Rick Baker



and crew are fabulously original and magically transfixing.

Cronenberg eschews all the tired, worn cliched approaches to contemporary terror (read: man with a big knife killing teenagers) and always gives us a clear, completely realized new theatre upon which he builds a nightmare world of man, nature and machine gone amok.

A very well controlled and quickly paced film, *Videodrome* promised lots, delivers more, and never fails to be anything less than absolutely riveting, provocative entertainment.

A disturbing look at our future by a man whose eyes have never left it; a man whose vision is so aggressively original that even his failures are beyond what most horror hack filmmakers are capable of aspiring to. A damn good scare.

## WOLFEN



1981, d: M. Wadleigh, 115 m.

Unique, very ambitious intelligently conceived horror film. Although the film never really delivers what it seems to promise throughout the first hour, it still remains a very classy, often exhilarating experience.

Plagued by problems throughout production (including numerous disappointments with the complex opticals), *Wolfen* is nonetheless a very good film; one which could have been one of the great contemporary horror classics.

Albert Finney is terrific as the tired,

cynical investigator probing into the violent deaths of several New Yorkers; and its his solid, relaxed acting that allows the film to maintain its balance throughout. And it needs the benefit of a calm center, as the outrageous elements like terrorism, Indian mysticism, political murders and radical zoology come careening at you from all angles. It seems that the story of a superior breed of intelligent wolves protecting their hunting grounds in contemporary New York was not enough; so numerous red-herrings are tossed in and then forgotten, making for a lot of unnecessary clutter and confusion.

The opticals used in the "Wolfenvision" and the exciting tracking shots accompanying the wolves' hunting forays are dizzyingly beautiful.

Dancer Gregory Hines, as a coroner's assistant, has a fantastically engaging, bubbling role and serves as an effective comic relief to save the film from sinking beneath its ponderous pretenses.

Carl Fullerton's effects are first-rate, zestfully bloody and superbly staged.

The first real screen appearance of the "wolfen" is bound to disappoint, if only because of the intense, full-throttled build up we were given for the first three-quarters of the film. As it turns out, they're just spray-painted bow-wows with optically enhanced eyes and fangs.

A good film - frustrating, though - because of what it *could* have been.

## ZOMBIE

1979, d: Lucio Fulci, 91 m.

This Italian *Dawn of the Dead* rip-off manages to overcome plodding music, mindless dubbing, and wooden acting to achieve its own cult status.

Released in Italy just after the success of Romero's classic and entitled *Zombie II (Dawn of the Dead)* was

IF YOU LOVED  
'DAWN OF THE DEAD,'  
YOU'LL JUST EAT UP  
'ZOMBIE'!



# ZOMBIE

THE DEAD ARE AMONG US!

There is no explicit sex in this picture.  
However, there are scenes of violence which may be considered shocking.  
No one under 17 will be admitted.

Distributed by The Jerry Gross Organization

released in Italy as *Zombie*), the film contains more than its share of unashamedly gleeful splatter effects, including probably the most harrowing, gripping and thoroughly gross sequences ever seen (involving one zombie, one woman's hazel eye, and a nasty 10" splinter).

The movie is pure exploitation and nonsense and looks to have been directed by two different people. Some really atmospheric, arty shots appear right next to lots of muddy, shaky, cretinous camera work. The scenes with zombies rising from their graves and shuffling into town en masse are very nicely realized, as are the loads of worms in the eye sockets.

Just about every method of interpersonal mayhem you've ever wanted to see in a horror film and lots you didn't want to see are liberally sprinkled throughout; you never have long to wait for the next decapitation, gunshot wound, cannibaliza-

tion, disembowelment, eye-gouging or sucking chest wound to lurch out at you.

Kind of clumsy, cartoon zombie movie, but with plenty of bite. Re-

leased without a rating because of the guaranteed "X" it would have received from the MPAA.

Bring your stomach distress bags.



# SELECTED FILMOGRAPHIES

## Dario Argento

1970 - *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*  
1971 - *The Cat O' Nine Tails*  
1971 - *Four Flies on Grey Velvet*  
1973 - *The Five Days of Milan*  
1975 - *Deep Red*  
1977 - *Suspiria*  
1980 - *Inferno*  
1982 - *Tenebrae (Unsane)*  
1984 - *Phenomena (Creepers)*  
1985 - *Demons (prod/scr)*  
1986 - *Demons 2 (prod/scr)*  
1987 - *Opera*  
1989 - *The Church (prod/scr)*  
1990 - *Two Evil Eyes*  
1991 - *The Devil's Daughter (prod/scr) (The Sect)*  
1992 - *Trauma*

## John Carpenter

1974 - *Dark Star*  
1976 - *Assault On Precinct 13*  
1978 - *Someone's Watching Me! (TV)*  
1979 - *Halloween*  
1979 - *Elvis (TV)*  
1980 - *The Fog*  
1981 - *Escape from New York*  
1982 - *The Thing*  
1983 - *Christine*  
1984 - *Starman*  
1986 - *Big Trouble in Little China*  
1987 - *Prince of Darkness*  
1988 - *They Live*  
1992 - *Memoirs of an Invisible Man*

## Wes Craven

1972 - *The Last House on the Left*  
1977 - *The Hills Have Eyes*  
1981 - *Deadly Blessing*  
1981 - *Swamp Thing*  
1983 - *The Hills Have Eyes 2*

1984 - *A Nightmare on Elm Street*  
1985 - *Chiller (TV)*  
1986 - *Deadly Friend*  
1988 - *The Serpent and the Rainbow*  
1990 - *Shocker*  
1991 - *The People Under the Stairs*

## David Cronenberg

1975 - *They Came From Within*  
1977 - *Rabid*  
1979 - *Fast Company*  
1979 - *The Brood*  
1981 - *Scanners*  
1983 - *Videodrome*  
1983 - *The Dead Zone*  
1986 - *The Fly*  
1988 - *Dead Ringers*  
1991 - *Naked Lunch*

## Joe Dante

1976 - *Hollywood Boulevard (co-d.)*  
1979 - *Piranha*  
1981 - *The Howling*  
1983 - *Twilight Zone - The Movie (co-d.)*  
1984 - *Gremlins*  
1985 - *Explorers*  
1987 - *Innerspace*  
1989 - *The 'Burbs*  
1991 - *Gremlins 2: The New Batch*  
1993 - *Matinee*

## Lucio Fulci

1969 - *Perversion Story*  
1969 - *Beatrice Cenci*  
1971 - *A Lizard in a Woman's Skin*  
1972 - *Don't Torture the Duckling*  
1973 - *White Fang*  
1974 - *The Return of White Fang*  
1975 - *Dracula in the Provinces*

**1976** - *La Pretora*  
**1977** - *The Psychic*  
**1978** - *Sella D'Argento*  
**1979** - *Zombie (Zombie 2)*  
**1980** - *Contraband*  
**1980** - *Gates of Hell*  
**1981** - *The Beyond*  
**1981** - *The Black Cat*  
**1981** - *House by the Cemetery*  
**1982** - *The New York Ripper*  
**1983** - *Eyes of the Evil Dead*  
*(Manhattan Baby)*  
**1983** - *Conquest*  
**1983** - *2072 A.D. Gladiators*  
**1984** - *Murderock*  
**1986** - *The Devil's Honey*  
**1987** - *Aenigma*  
**1988** - *Zombi 3 (co-d.)*  
**1988** - *Demonia*  
**1988** - *A Touch of Death*  
**1988** - *The Ghosts of Sodom*  
**1989** - *The House of Clocks*  
*(TV)*  
**1989** - *Sweet House of Horrors*  
*(TV)*  
**1990** - *Nightmare Concert*  
**1990** - *Voices from the Deep*  
**1991** - *Door to Silence*

### **Stuart Gordon**

**1985** - *Re-Animator*  
**1986** - *From Beyond*  
**1987** - *Dolls*  
**1989** - *Robojox*  
**1989** - *Daughter of Darkness*  
*(TV)*  
**1990** - *The Pit and the Pendulum*  
**1993** - *Fortress*

### **Frank Henenlotter**

**1982** - *Basket Case*  
**1988** - *Brain Damage*  
**1989** - *Basket Case 2*  
**1990** - *Frankenhooker*  
**1991** - *Basket Case 3: The Progeny*

### **Tobe Hooper**

**1972** - *Eggshells*  
**1974** - *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*  
**1976** - *Eaten Alive*  
**1979** - *Salem's Lot*  
**1981** - *The Funhouse*  
**1982** - *Poltergeist*  
**1985** - *Lifeforce*  
**1986** - *Invaders from Mars*  
**1986** - *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*  
**1989** - *I'm Dangerous Tonight*  
**1990** - *Spontaneous Combustion*

### **Peter Jackson**

**1989** - *Bad Taste*  
**1990** - *Meet the Feebles*  
**1992** - *Braindead*

### **Sam Raimi**

**1982** - *The Evil Dead*  
**1985** - *Crimewave*  
**1987** - *Evil Dead 2: Dead by Dawn*  
**1990** - *Darkman*  
**1993** - *Army of Darkness*

### **George A. Romero**

**1968** - *Night of the Living Dead*  
**1972** - *There's Always Vanilla*  
*(The Affair)*  
**1973** - *The Crazies* (Code Name: *Trixie*)  
**1978** - *Martin*  
**1979** - *Dawn of the Dead*  
**1981** - *Knightriders*  
**1982** - *Creepshow*  
**1985** - *Day of the Dead*  
**1988** - *Monkey Shines: An Experiment In Fear*  
**1990** - *Two Evil Eyes*  
**1992** - *The Dark Half*

### **Tom Savini**

**1972** - *Deathdream (Dead of Night)*  
**1974** - *Deranged*  
**1978** - *Martin*

**1979** - *Dawn of the Dead*  
**1980** - *Friday the 13th*  
**1980** - *Maniac*  
**1981** - *Eyes of a Stranger*  
**1981** - *The Burning*  
**1981** - *The Prowler*  
**1981** - *Knightriders*  
**1982** - *Creepshow*  
**1983** - *Till Death Do We Scare*  
**1984** - *Friday the 13th - The Final Chapter*

**1985** - *Day of the Dead*  
**1986** - *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*  
**1988** - *Monkey Shines: An Experiment In Fear*  
**1990** - *Heartstopper*  
**1990** - *Two Evil Eyes*  
**1991** - *Bloodsucking Pharaohs in Pittsburgh*  
**1991** - *Night of the Living Dead*

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PIERRE BRICE. PRODUTTORE ASSIST. DI PRODUZIONE:  
DARIO ARGENTO  
TECHNICONTRIBUTO: TECHNICOLOR



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Chas. Balun** is a former weightlifter, pole-vaulter and guitarist for Sparky and the Space Band. His other books include **HORROR HOLOCAUST**, **THE GORE SCORE** and **NINTH AND HELL STREET**. He is the founding editor of **DEEP RED Magazine** and the screenwriter of **CHUNK-BLOWER: THE MOVIE**. Balun lives in Huntington Beach, California and has loved monster movies since birth.

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